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# The Evolution of a Great Literature

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE  
JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES

BY  
NEWTON MANN

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*"Veritatem dies aperit"*

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By NEWTON MANN

**Dedication.**

TO

REV. T. K. CHEYNE, D. D.

ORIEL PROFESSOR OF THE INTERPRETATION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE  
AT OXFORD, CANON OF ROCHESTER, WHOSE RESEARCHES  
HAVE THROWN A FLOOD OF LIGHT ON  
OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETIES

AND TO

W. C. VAN MANEN, D. D.

PROFESSOR OF OLD CHRISTIAN LITERATURE AND NEW TESTAMENT  
EXEGESIS, LEYDEN, WHOM FUTURE READERS OF  
THE BIBLE WILL BLESS FOR HAVING SIFT GOSPELS AND  
EPISTLES IN INTELLIGIBLE TIME-RELATIONS

**This Book**

WHICH OWES SO MUCH TO THEM  
IS DEDICATED  
WITH SENTIMENTS OF PROFOUND REVERENCE AND  
GRATITUDE

The Bible is not a book, but a literature — ANDREW D. WHITE

The Bible, with its many strata of thought reaching through a thousand years, shows us the growth in the idea of God, from a narrow and jealous Jehovah dividing men, to a Universal Love uniting them — HENRY M. SIMMONS

So erweist sich die Religionsentwicklung als der Fortschritt von der patriarchalischen Natur durch das theokratische Gesetz hindurch zur sittlichen Freiheit der Gotteskinder, wie dies schon der Apostel Paulus [einer so sich nennend] erkannt und in den drei Typen: Abraham, Moses, und Christus dargestellt hat. — PFLEIDERER.

Tout sert à l'intelligence dans sa marche éternelle Les systèmes sont des instruments à l'aide desquels l'homme découvre des vérités de détail, tout en se trompant sur l'ensemble; et quand les systèmes ont passé, les vérités demeurent. . . Pour qui croit en Dieu, toute lumière vient de lui, comme tout ce qu'il y a en nous de bon et de noble, et la révélation est partout où il y a quelque chose de vrai, de noble et de bon. — BENJAMIN CONSTANT, 1824

## PREFACE.

THIS work sets up no great claim of originality. Its aim is to present within small compass and for the use of the general reader the main conclusions of advanced scholarship touching the composition of the various parts of the Bible. Already in Germany an earnest movement is on foot for the popularization of the new views and of the knowledge on which they rest, and it would seem that here in America we ought not to be far behind. The unsatisfactory situation has arisen in which a branch of knowledge confessedly of the first importance, with direct bearing on religion, is practically restricted to a few, to scholarly clergymen and lay students of theology. This knowledge is mostly lodged in ponderous and costly tomes and encumbered with an array of linguistic and other lore calculated to intimidate the unlearned

inquirer, who yet desires to know something of what has been found out. It has seemed to me that there must be many hungry souls without the time or the equipment for extensive researches, who would welcome a frank effort to tell them, in outline, the results of recent biblical criticism — results well enough known to University professors, taught in many Divinity Schools, familiar to many preachers whose sermons are void of any least intimation of such a thing. He who boasts no Hebrew and no Greek has yet good right to know what scholars are thinking about the ancient textbook of our religion, and any curiosity he may have in that direction ought to be encouraged rather than repressed. All is well that helps to break down the tendency, already far advanced, to separate religious thinkers into the initiated and the uninitiated, and religious thought into esoteric and exoteric divisions.

To be useful in this way is the end to which this book addresses itself. Accordingly, in its preparation there has been a studied avoidance of abstrusities and obscurities, and a greater retrenchment of the discussion at various points than can

please the student already familiar with the subject. I am not here presuming to instruct the wise; I would be helpful to those who sit in darkness and who are aware of the fact. To keep within the limits prescribed by the main purpose, the treatment is necessarily for the most part sketchy, venturing into some elaboration only in dealing with the more recent and less familiar contentions; the thought being, not to tell all, but to tell so much as may create a desire to inquire further, and to tell that much clearly.

Grateful acknowledgement is made of the sympathetic interest in the work shown by Mr. James H. West, who, in its progress, has offered many a happy suggestion and exercised an exceedingly watchful care of the literary form. The faults that remain may be attributed to a perversity of my own in not heeding all of his recommendations.

The scientific path is the only one that leads to anything in this field, and my effort has been to keep with those who go in that path, and not be led off into intersecting, tortuous sectarian byways. Science so disregardfully traverses all de-

nominational lines that one toiling in her name never stops to ask of what church-connection one's guide or helper may be ; but, now that my task is done, I have been curious to look over the list of my authorities with reference to this matter. It turns out that the conclusions arrived at, though they may be advanced, are not heretical ; at least the authorities from whom they are drawn are almost without exception of one or another orthodox connection. The names of a few of the scholars whose judgment has been most relied on are here appended, and with a sense of obligation which it is hoped the reader will come to share, since the full object of making this epitome of some of their labors will not be attained unless it lead to a direct study of these sources of light. The list might be largely extended, but the main authorities made use of are the following (in alphabetical order) :

Dr. E. A. Abbott, London ; Professor W. Bousset, Göttingen ; Dr. Carl Budde, Marburg ; J. Estlin Carpenter, Oxford ; Dr. R. H. Charles, Dublin ; Dr. T. K. Cheyne, Oxford ; Dr. Orello Cone, recently deceased, my boyhood companion

and life-long friend; Dr. A. B. Davidson; Dr. S. R. Driver, Oxford; Hermann Guthe, Leipsic; Dr. A. Harnack, Berlin; Professor H. J. Holtzmann, Strassburg; Dr. M. R. James, Cambridge; G. A. Julicker, Marburg; A. Kamphausen, Bonn; Dr. F. Kautzsch, Halle; W. H. Kosters; Dr. A. Kuenen; Dr. W. C. van Manen, Leyden; Dr. Karl Marti, Berne; Dr. James Martineau; Eduard Meyer, Halle; Professor H. G. Mitchell, Boston; Dr. G. F. Moore, Harvard; Theodor Noldeke, Strassburg; Dr. O. Pfleiderer, Berlin; Dr. Albert Reville, Paris; Auguste Sabatier; Dr. P. W. Schmiedel, Zürich; Professor N. Schmidt, Cornell; Dr. B. Stade, Giessen; Dr. C. C. Torrey, Yale; Dr. C. H. Toy, Harvard; Paul Volz; Dr. J. Wellhausen, Gottingen; Dr. H. Winckler, Berlin.

Among these are two or three who are not called orthodox, but nothing of importance is taken from them that might not equally well have been taken from the others.

I should be proud indeed if I could honestly present as my own discoveries all that is herein set forth. But that is a boast beyond what even

the greatest can make; and then it is to be said that the open use of other men's ideas may, in conceivable situations, have its advantages. If ever this volume brings down upon me the charge of an undue radicalism, of sowing the seeds of revolution, I can, if so disposed, drop under cover of illustrious names, and say: "I have been sitting at the feet of the foremost scholars of the great Evangelical churches; their disclosures have filled me with light and joy. The substance of the book is what they have taught me."

NEWTON MANN.

OMAHA, Nebraska, September, 1905.

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## INTRODUCTORY:

### Attitude of Approach to the Subject.

Extremes of reverence and of indifference — What is the Bible? — Its Jewish origin and the anti-Jewish prejudice — Early spread of Christianity in face of that prejudice — First acceptance of Jewish sacred books in Europe more nominal than real — Value of the Bible as a book of religion — Assumption as to its supernatural character — Best considered the surviving literature of an ancient people — Security from attack on that basis — Deliverance from any need of forced interpretations — No difficulty then presented by the fact that many of its precepts are paralleled in other sacred books — The paradox involved in regarding perception of divine truth as a distinctively Jewish gift — Real superiority of the Jewish race

THE attitudes of people toward the Bible are many and various, arising from a mingling of all degrees of reverence and indifference. Even the extreme of reverence which accounts this book the very Word of God is accompanied by a measure of practical indifference to its contents sufficiently surprising; and the extreme of professed disregard bows to an apt quotation from its pages, makes oath upon it, keeps it in the house, perhaps slyly uses it as an amulet. But neither its unreserved worshipers

nor its avowed contemners make a study of the book in the way other books are studied. To one party its significance is too low to repay the effort; to the other it is so high they cannot attain to it. The latter are deterred by the sanctity of the book from applying the means of elucidation deemed indispensable to the understanding of other ancient writings, and content themselves with the old and exhausted method of textual exegesis.

To another order of minds the question is pressing, What is the Bible — an infallible authority miraculously given, or the serious literature of an ancient people, the fruit of their varied experience and discipline? This is indeed the first question to be settled, and when one has got so far as to ask it, there is little doubt what the answer will be.

A strange implication of the theory of a supernatural revelation commonly received among Christians is, that only Jews were ever able to utter so high a word. The readiness with which this exalted distinction is accorded looks the more mysterious when we consider the scorn and contempt poured upon Jews time out of mind, the persecution they have suffered and are suffering at Christian hands. The trite explanation that God and man have turned against this people on account of the course of their

ancestors with Jesus, seems to lack in reason and common morality, to say nothing of the Christ-like spirit. The crime charged, if established, is too far back to be a ground of enmity against the present generation, or to justify any least antipathy. The prejudice in fact defies moral justification, being, as a recent writer has shown,\* a racial, unreasoning instinct, whose activity with Aryan peoples in pre-Christian times is matter of history. Religious differences doubtless heightened the antipathy ; they did not create it. Its roots are deep in that strangeness which goes with the distinction of race from race.

That full in the face of this racial prejudice the Hebrew scriptures should have won their way, carrying with them recognition of the Jews as God's "chosen people," seems a positive demonstration of the superiority of those scriptures. And such indeed it is ; but the conditions under which this came about are to be taken into account. Christianity, when it came into Europe with these writings, found the Graeco-Roman world miserably poor in religion and in religious books ; and what the new religion in the days of its first great expansion presented as its text-

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\* SHALER, "The Neighbor."

book was far from being the whole Jewish scripture, or even the whole Jewish-Christian scripture,— it was John's Gospel, a writing deeply tinged with Greek thought, setting forth its hero in Greek terms as a divine emanation partaking of the eternity of God, with nothing distinctively Jewish about him.\* By that time, too, the bearers of the Christian message to the gentiles had ceased to be Jews, and racial prejudice, which is primarily of the person, subsided as to the books, and these were taken over gradually and with ease on the theory that Christians, having become the people of God, came by inheritance into the possession of whatever He had given to His former chosen people.

But adoption and ownership do not necessarily imply a vital connection. If racial distinctions are primarily physical, they are of the mind also, and reach to productions of the mind. A race has characteristic modes of thought, characteristic forms of expression, difficult or distasteful, it may be, to another

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\* If the Jesus of literal history might seem to an educated gentile merely as an individual member of the despised Jewish race, the impression must necessarily have been very different when, as now (in the Fourth Gospel), he was presented as the *Logos* of God, as the world-principle which had existed long before Judaism came into being, and even upon earth was exalted above everything Jewish.— SCHIMMEL.

The Hebrew scriptures under the peculiar instances of the early Christian propaganda ly enough obtained a nominal acceptance, but distinctive Hebrew quality prevented a complete adherence to them save in exceptional instances. In the middle ages, later, the Puritans, took them with an entire devotion ; but the mass of converts from paganism in the early days practically renounced their acceptance of the old scriptures only to adhere to their own forms and customs without adopting the Jewish ; that is, made it a nominal acceptance. In our time, we must admit, hardly anybody really takes the Bible in earnest found impracticable on account of the differential habit of thought and expression, to say nothing of the conditions of ancient life in Palestine so strongly contrasting with the Christian's environment in the modern world. The book is read, parts with a sentimental approval, other and parts with a feeling that they pertain to a world since passed away ; only very restricted passages really laying hold of the present life of man.

We are now beginning to wake up to the fact that religious center of the world for us is not in some Asiatic land, and back two or three thousand years, but here and now in the existing spiritual

nature of living souls. Religion is an experience, and must be living and personal; it cannot be made to consist in a reflection of other men's experiences in other ages. Such experiences, recorded in books, may be very helpful, but they cannot be for us the real thing. The Bible, which we have received from the Jews, is in the main a record of the religious experiences of that people during a long period, and as such is of exceeding value. It has value as history, each part casting some light on the time in which it was actually written; it has value as storehouse of Semitic traditions covering a long previous period; but its chief worth as a book of religion lies in its being incidentally a record of the developing spiritual nature of a people from a condition of rather low to a condition of very high culture, a record chiefly made up of the out-givings of the nation's foremost souls through the successive centuries of this great development. The Hebrew prophets and poets, while of course saying much that is of merely local and temporary concern, much, too, that our consciences cannot approve, yet rose at times to the utterance of universal truth, good for all times and places. While centering our religious life on our own inborn spiritual sensibilities, we derive from these lights out of a past age an ever grateful inspiration.

The assumption of a supernatural origin for the scriptures, of elements in them that could never have been developed from the human heart and soul, burdens the modern thinker with much embarrassment. As every one now knows, the same assumption is made by the Mohammedans for the Koran, by the Hindus for the Vedas,— by each one of the great religions in turn, for its sacred book. Each will claim that its book and its book alone is without error, the uncorrupted Word come down from God out of heaven. Among Western nations, that claim has been so long and so stoutly iterated and reiterated for the Bible that the uncritical believe it to be established without ever asking on what grounds. But the reflecting have come to a better judgment. They see that, while the Bible — at any rate for people of our antecedents — is the best of all the sacred books, it is not by any means free from errors of fact ; that it abounds in fabulous stories, myths, and legends ; and that its moral teaching is not infrequently open to criticism. And this is the verdict not of the enemies of religion, but of its supporters and representatives, Christian scholars who have given the most painstaking, exhaustive thought to the subject. We hear the cry from some quarters for an expurgated Bible for home and public use, for an authorized, official

selection of devotional literature from extra-biblical sources to supplement the Bible in the services of worship — a step which, once taken, must obliterate the world-wide distinction now formally set up between canonical and other religious books. Such a distinction the free-minded are coming to see is not real. Everywhere it is said that truth wherever found, all truth, is of God ; that it is never far to seek, dropping plenteously as the rain from heaven ; and the thoughtful are beginning to inquire how the exclusive use of the Bible as the book of religion comports with this. There is even excited in some minds, by this exclusive use, an antagonism to the Bible, a protest, silent perhaps, but no less positive, operating to its prejudice. It is a case where an undue disesteem may be induced by the awarding of an excessive honor.

Taking the position in theory, and supporting it in practice, that the collection of little books called the Bible is simply the surviving religious literature of an ancient people, we are, to begin with, on a defensible basis, secure from assaults which are daily making every other position more untenable ; we are where we cannot be embarrassed by anything that science may discover or that criticism may uncover. Do the geologists and the archæologists point out that the stories of the creation and of the flood are without

validity, being disproved by incontrovertible evidences? We are prepared to accept the verdict at once as nowise surprising, these stories in Genesis being obviously only old-time myths which the writer found afloat and noted down, or drew from more ancient books. Does Professor Delitzsch remind us that the so-called Law of Moses shows conclusive signs of having been modeled on the code of Hammurabi, king of Babylon? That is what, on our theory of the origin of the Pentateuch, is the most natural thing in the world. Are we told that the narratives of the Hebrew sojourn in Egypt, the passage thence, and the conquest of Canaan, cannot in all their details be true? Our answer is, How could they be, the writer lived so many hundred years after the time in which his scenes are laid? Is it objected that the morals of Abraham and of David, and of many another hero of the record, are not what we can approve, that Moses made mistakes, that prophets prophesied for the most part what never came to pass? We have only to say that all this accords perfectly with the rational theory of the origin of the books. So with all the discoveries of errors and contradictions in these old writings; we are not surprised and we are not disturbed; our position is in no way threatened. In other words, in abandoning the notion of a super-

natural revelation, a book virtually handed down from God out of heaven, infallible in every part, and taking the perfectly natural ground that the old Jews wrote their books out of their own heads, precisely as the old Greeks and the old Romans wrote theirs, we are not obliged to find every word true, every precept pure, every commended example noble ; we are on a defensible basis as regards the scriptures.

And this is the only attitude of approach in which the inquirer can hope to come to the real significance of these writings. Approaching them with the notion that they can contain nothing but what is absolutely true and good, the student begins to wrest from its natural sense every passage which on its face conveys a false idea or breathes a spirit of cruelty or of vengeance, or which is in contradiction with some other passage. To what hideous duplicity have commentators in this way been constrained to lend themselves ! How has the text groaned and shrieked under the racks and thumb-screws they have applied to it, yielding up at last in an agony of despair any imaginable sense to suit the requirements of its tormentors !

Coming to the Bible in the rational way, we are not distressed to find that some of the best things in it are to be found elsewhere, in writings yet older. On the contrary, we are pleased that Zarathustra and

Confucius and Gautama should have uttered, centuries before Jesus, precepts similar to his ; it speaks well for human nature. So Mencius and Socrates and Seneca and Epictetus somehow got independently at the fundamental moral ideas expressed in the Gospel. Marcus Aurelius was probably a nobler character than ever sat on the throne of Israel or of Judah. But the partisans of an exclusive revelation are in much trouble over these facts. Whatever the explanation of them, by whatever means these heathen arrived at their wisdom and their virtue, it is stoutly contended that the Bible writers did not do *their* work without special illumination from on high, and, by the hypothesis, they were the only ones who had this help. There seems to be here, from this point of view, the implication of natural moral and spiritual inferiority in the Jew. Though the theory has been received from the Jews themselves, does there not crop out in the maintenance of it in the light of what we now know of other "seekers after God," something of the general scorn of Christians for the Jew ? Is there not discernible here,—in the disinclination to exalt him to the rank of saying, unaided, what the seers of other races have, at least in part, said,—a disposition to belittle the Jew in this matter, make him the mere tool of the Almighty, who, having used him for a purpose and found him

wanting, casts him off? Does it not seem as though the whole doctrine of a "chosen people" were now taken to illustrate the saying that "God chose the foolish things of the world that he might put to shame them that are wise, the weak things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are strong, and the base things of the world and the things that are despised did God choose, that no flesh might glory before God"? This admitted, the theory of a chosen people may in a manner be harmonized with age-long Aryan contempt and persecution of that same people. Of course there remains what must be a bitter reflection, the fact that Jesus was a Jew. But the imputation is partially met by the doctrine announced toward the close of the first century that he was not the son of Joseph, and, in the Catholic Church, by the doctrine of the immaculate conception of his mother, decreed in 1854.\* Then, with all Trinitarians, there is the overpowering consideration of his divinity, which dwarfs to insignificance every distinction of race.

But in the face of Aryan scorn the fact is that of

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\* These two dogmas taken together might be supposed to imply that Jesus was only one-fourth Jew, but it is just to say that Catholic expounders of the papal decree do not carry it so far as altogether to deliver "the Virgin Mary" from the charge of having a human, and so of course a Jewish, father.

all the races of men the Jew stands at the head in many most important respects. He has been in the modern world conspicuous among financiers, artists, philosophers, statesmen. He writes books, publishes newspapers, holds official positions, influences public opinion, far out of proportion to his numbers. There is no reason to think that the race was relatively less efficient in the old days; it was probably very much more so. The very persistence of this people since the loss of political independence so long ago speaks for the racial stamina then possessed. Besides, they had markedly in the old days what we may call a genius for religion, as the Greeks had for philosophy and for art, as the Romans had for law and for arms. No people were ever so fitted by native endowment and by experience to produce religious writings of permanent value. It belonged to them to make the Bible, and they made it as naturally as Greece made the Homeric poems.

As this work of production extended over a period of about a thousand years, we are prepared to see in it a reflection of the varying civilization of that eventful millennium, a gradual widening and elevation of the thought of God, a slow but sure gain in morals, a yet slower spiritualization of worship, in all of which there is manifested, in the one case most accessible

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for our study, the evolution of a great religion. No more instructive subject of contemplation can be offered, and no more signal triumph has been made than here for the scientific method, which tends ever to the systemization of knowledge and to the unification of systems.









# The Evolution of a Great Literature



## CHAPTER I.

### The Historical Basis — Its Immediate Implications.

Antiquity to which Hebrew writings can be traced — Probability that earlier books existed which have not been preserved — Moses, myth or man? — Babylonian influence on Hebrew thought — Thence the Creation and Deluge myths, type of Law, the Sabbath, magic rites, healing art — Authenticity of Hebrew history — Was there a sojourn in Egypt? — Condition of the tribes on arrival in Canaan — Conquest of Canaan — The tribal deity and his worship — Character of Samuel — Saul, David, Solomon — Revolt of the Northern tribes — Elijah, Elisha — Crude beginnings of prophecy — Amos, Hosea, and the opening of a literary age — Gain in half a millennium.

**A** BOOK is not necessarily as old as the events it treats of. Nobody ever supposed that the first chapters of Genesis, because they contain an account of the creation and of the first created pair, really date from the time of those events. Still,

such a supposition would be attended with only the same sort of difficulty as is the claim for Mosaic authorship, namely: it is not possible to trace the book back so far, or any part of it, along Hebrew lines. The beginning of the eighth century B. C. is the earliest point to which any part of the Bible can be definitely traced in Israel, and there we are yet five hundred years this side of Moses. In that century wrote Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. But buried in what are called the Legal and the Historical books, coming first in order in our Bible, are considerable fragments which appear to have descended from an earlier time. The value of these is extremely uncertain, owing to the fact that we do not know in what manner they were preserved up to the time of their embodiment in the books that have come down to us. A previous generation of critics supposed these fragments to be derived from oral tradition and from rude memoranda handed down from ancestors who hardly knew how to write,—material which the compilers felt free to expand and embellish; on which supposition the historical value of accounts relating to a far previous time would have to be reckoned very low. The discoveries of the last thirty years have necessitated some modification of this view. The records of the monuments, Babylonian,

Assyrian, Syrian, have cast a fresh light on the subject. From these we have abundant reason to think that the region where the Israelites dwelt when we first hear of them as a settled people was then measurably civilized. Though they were at that time a combination of rude tribes,—ruder, it would seem, than their neighbors or the people they displaced, at least a portion of them having, as their traditions indicate, been rovers of the desert,—they must, on acquiring a fixed habitation somewhere about 1300 b. c., have come more directly under the influence of Babylonian culture, which had then for many centuries permeated all western Asia. This is no longer matter of speculation, but rests on positive and incontrovertible evidence. Not only has there been brought to light proof of a Babylonian civilization extending to the Mediterranean long before the beginnings of Hebrew history, we have already large knowledge of the quality of that civilization, of the government, laws, religious and other customs of the people, and are able to point with precision to certain things which the Hebrews beyond a question adopted from them. And with the adoption of customs, legends, laws, there must have gone some infusion of a more varied culture. The literary traits of the Babylonians would have some few imitators; there would be those who would

make records, though failure to follow their teachers in the use of imperishable tablets leaves us without positive proof of this. Egypt, too, in the early period must have exercised a certain influence in the same direction, though racial antagonism and lack of affinity for Egyptian customs and ideas stood in the way. On the whole, therefore, it is difficult to suppose that the Hebrews were without books anterior to the eighth century b. c. The very high character of the earliest authors whose books are preserved to us under their names — Amos and Hosea — compels us to think that they had their predecessors whose works have not been preserved, except as merged in the History and Law books. How far back we can reasonably extend such a conjecture is a more troublesome question. Certainly the farther we carry it the more tenuous it becomes; five hundred years puts it to a great strain, and we do not wonder at the hesitancy of scholars to admit that we have anything that we can say with the least confidence is from the hand of Moses. Winckler, Cheyne, and others of the very ablest critics do not see that the evidence is adequate to establish Moses as an historical character. If, however, there was such a person, it is less difficult than it was fifty years ago to think that he could read and write, that he left behind for the guidance of his

people some few written regulations. At any rate, we are not barred from supposing that scraps of writing were made by Hebrews away back in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, serving as a lodgment for the tribal traditions. Whatever was written in centuries anterior to Amos would be strongly colored by Babylonian conceptions, and the historical narrative extending from the creation to the exodus would be taken, when it came to be made, largely from legends preserved by the older and kindred people.

The main question, therefore, antecedent to our inquiry regards the Babylonian culture. Thanks to the excavations which are bringing to the light of day multitudinous records of the people who, from the mighty city by the Euphrates, so long shaped the destinies of half the world,—original writings made four thousand, five thousand years ago,—we are in possession of a large amount of precise information on this subject. That people not only built magnificent cities, marshaled mighty armies, carried agriculture to high perfection by vast systems of irrigation; they had courts with systematic legal process, an elaborate code already a thousand years old in the time of Moses, they had a literature of such imposing dimensions that men enough cannot now be found to trans-

late the débris of it which is being gathered up,—poetry, philosophy, cosmogony, ritual, magic, and what not. To astronomy they were the first to give attention, and for thousands of years Babylon was famed for its observatories. They had their legend of how the earth and the heavens were made, properly speaking a myth, the chief of all the many myths of this myth-making people. There are even two forms of it, as of the Hebrew creation-story. The Babylonians located Paradise in their own country, by the Euphrates, and the Hebrew story connects the place with the same river. Next to the creation-myth in prominence in Babylonian story comes that of the Deluge. Its parallelism with the Bible flood-story is striking, as may be seen from this paraphrase of it, taken from the *Encyclopædia Biblica*:

The gods, more especially Bel, wroth at the sins of men, determine to bring upon them a judgment consisting in a great all-destroying flood. One of the gods, however, named Ea, selects a favored man for deliverance. This man is, in a dream, acquainted by Ea with the purpose of the gods, and commanded to build a ship, the form of which is prescribed, as a means of saving his life, and to take with him into it “seeds of life of all kinds.” Accordingly the ship is built; its dimensions are given with great precision by the myth-maker, who mentions that it was coated within and without with bitumen, and that cells were

made in it. Into this vessel the favored of Ea brings gold and silver and "seeds of life of all kinds," besides his family and servants, beasts of the field and wild beasts. Shortly before the Flood, the beginning of which is made known to him by a special sign, he enters the ship and bars the door, while his steersman takes over the direction of the vessel. Upon this the deluge begins : it is thought of as an unloosing of all the elemental powers, torrents of rain, storm and tempest, together with thick darkness. The waters rise higher and higher till the whole land becomes a sea ; all men and animals except those in the ship perish. At length a calm sets in ; the master of the ship opens the air-hole and observes the widespread ruin. At the same time land emerges, and the ship grounds on the mountain of Nisir. After seven days more he sends out successively a dove, a swallow, and a raven. The dove and the swallow, finding no place of rest, return to the ship ; but the raven is seen no more. Upon this he clears the ship and offers a sacrifice on the summit of the mountain. "The gods smelt the savor, the gods smelt the sweet savor ; the gods gathered like flies about the sacrificer "

This and other stories with which we have grown familiar in their biblical form were published in Babylon and were current all over western Asia centuries before a word of the Bible was written, before the Israelites came into Canaan. The code of Hammurabi also, on which the Mosaic code is obviously based, must have been familiar throughout this region from the time that Babylon rose to be a great

power. We are therefore led to think that these elements of the Hexateuch (as the first six books of the Old Testament are called) may have been adapted and put in writing by the Hebrews more extensively and at a much earlier date than a few years ago was considered possible. It is no longer necessary to suppose that the people could only have learned these things by an exile in Babylonia.

If Babylon diffused its light and its law over hither Asia in the second and third millenniums before Christ, it also diffused its superstitions, of which it had no lack. As in all the early civilizations, magic cut a great figure with this people, confounding itself, as elsewhere, with their religion. Seven was a magical number with the Babylonians; so the seventh day with them was a sacred day, a Sabbath. Recent discoveries prove conclusively that this institution among the Hebrews was derived directly from this source. This is no disparagement of the Sabbath; it must have come from somewhere; and it is well to know to whom we are indebted, and to give credit to whom credit is due.

The priests in Babylon had the administration of law as well as of religion in their hands; and, as all physical and other ailments were held to be of spiritual origin, that is, the effect of some spell worked by evil

spirits, they, as the spiritual functionaries, were also healers, thus combining in themselves the three leading modern professions. There were specially sacred places where cures were wrought with particular efficiency, as now at Lourdes. One of these was Eridu, six thousand years ago the sea-port of Babylon, situated at the then mouth of the Euphrates, but, unlike modern sea-ports, much more of a religious than a commercial center. The medical prescriptions of that far-off time which have been exhumed are of the most extraordinary. One and all, they go on the theory that disease is a demon; and the whole art of healing lies in driving the demon out of the patient by one and another magical procedure. A number of these old prescriptions have been translated, and they give a vivid idea of the hapless lot of the sick in the early millenniums of history. They were generally written in verse, an indication of studious care neglected by modern practitioners. In producing one of them here, an effort is made to preserve the metrical feature of the original. The appeal to magic is not more distinct than in the reported case of Moses curing the bites of venomous snakes by means of a brazen snake set on a pole, or than in Elisha's prescription of a seven-fold ablution for the cure of leprosy. It was written apparently for a desperate case accom-

panied by fractious delirium. Observe that the magical knots have to be twisted twice seven times, and that the patient is to undergo very rough handling.

Twice seven times tie him to his bed,  
Mingling spells of Eridu,  
Bind the sick man's aching head,  
Bind his neck till he is blue,  
Bind his life lest it escape,  
Bind his limbs, and bind them fast,  
Bind him in such bewildering shape,  
That Disease shall fly aghast \*

Derision of this treatment may lie in the story of Samson, bound with green withes and ropes, but medical art hardly ever got beyond this sort of thing in Israel, as witnesses a prescription for blindness in John 9 : 6, 7.

Naturally the rude Hebrews, coming about 1300 B. C. more directly into the circle of Babylonian influence, absorbed first some of the magic arts, the myths, the legends ; then something of the civil code. These elements in the Pentateuch, we may readily imagine, began to take written form soon after the advent of the people in Canaan, slowly growing to something more considerable from century to century. Documents thus produced would, at a later day, with more

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\* For the original, see SAYCE, "The Higher Criticism and the Monuments," p. 75.

or less modification, go into books which, after successive changes, came to be held sacred, and thus acquired persistence, secure from further change. Of other elements, particularly the elaborate ceremonial regulations, we cannot admit so much. A rude people does not take to these refinements readily. The Hebrews could have had no use for the priestly law of Leviticus in the time of Moses, nor for hundreds of years thereafter. This kind of thing must be sifted out and relegated to a later age.

A true historical conception of Israel is the only basis of a just and promising examination into the age and authorship of the various portions of the Old Testament. And first of all we come to the question of the sojourn of the people in Egypt. If the discovery of very ancient Babylonian sources for many of the myths and legal regulations of the Pentateuch has led us to accord a higher antiquity than heretofore to the Hebrew adaptations of them, absence, in all the countless Egyptian inscriptions that have been examined, of the least reference to the coming of the Israelites into Egypt, their stay there, or their exodus, casts grave doubt on the whole Hebrew account of that matter. Add to this the suspicious fact that the story is encumbered with the most astounding prodigies performed by Moses to constrain the Pharaoh

to consent to his scheme and in the execution of it, and the whole story of the Egyptian sojourn becomes exceedingly dubious. While the grandiose and long-accepted theory of a bondage in Egypt has not been generally abandoned by scholars, there is an evident tendency to question its soundness, and to turn to the more tenable view that in their beginnings the Hebrews were not in Egypt in any considerable numbers, but dwelt, or wandered, on the Arabian side of the Red Sea, on and about the Sinaitic peninsula. This view explains without the aid of a miracle the sanctity in which Sinai was always held by the Hebrews: it was the original seat of their tribal existence. Any view which obviates the difficulty of the non-mention of Israel on the Egyptian monuments so far commends itself.

We may well suppose that a small fraction of the Israelites lived over the border in Egypt, and were, by some political convulsion or racial persecution about the time of the reported exodus, driven out to join the bulk of their tribe in the neighborhood of Sinai. The whole people under such circumstances would naturally be disquieted by their proximity to Egypt, and be led to withdraw farther into the Arabian desert. Thus may have ensued the wandering there through long years, of which there seems to have been

preserved an authentic tradition, mixed, however, in the record, with much of myth and marvel. The whole preceding story of Jacob and his sons going down into Egypt and growing there into a people millions strong, their trials and bondage, and their final passage out through the Red Sea, becomes on this theory a fiction of the Hebrew imagination. Then, the notion that they brought into Palestine, on their appearance there, a strict monotheism, a high ethical standard, and an elaborate ritual, must be dismissed as sheer fantasy. They arrived there decidedly crude sons of the desert, chiefly distinguished for a barbaric ferocity in battle. Then and for long after, these people worshiped no end of gods. They had their own tribal god to whom they gave special adherence, but he was in those days a conception which certainly could command no reverence in the modern world. The name they gave him, commonly written "Jehovah," is better pronounced Yahwè, say the Hebrew scholars, and, for psychological reasons as well as philological, it is desirable to substitute that form. The term "Jehovah," from long association with Christian names of deity, suggests conceptions which have no likeness to the early Hebrew idea, and it obstructs a just criticism by interposing a term which has acquired an undue sanctity to our ears.

The Yahwè of three thousand years ago was the twin-brother of Molech, a fierce and merciless being, reflecting the temper of a ferocious band of invaders. The rites by which he was worshiped were bloody and revolting, but comparatively simple, having no likeness to the ritual long after adopted and attributed to Moses. Indeed, eight hundred years after Moses is as early a date as can now be maintained for the books containing the fully developed priestly regulations.

The book of Joshua, like the historical parts of the preceding books (of Deuteronomy there will be occasion to speak more particularly later on), while evidently not written in the period of which it treats, is, in its substance, much older than the priestly rules of Leviticus. It deals with an event really historical, namely, the conquest of the little strip of territory along the west side of the Jordan on which the Israelites did actually establish themselves. However, the obvious desire of the author to lift his hero into a worthy successor of Moses leads him into exaggerations and apparent misstatements which largely vitiate the historical quality of his work. Certainly no such uniformly triumphant entry into Canaan, and no such utter destruction of cities and ruthless butchery of their inhabitants, took place as he relates. We know well that Israel was not, at that time, nor even for

centuries thereafter, a nation united and prepared for such a thoroughgoing conquest. What is more, the very towns which Joshua is said to have razed to the ground, and the tribes which he wiped out root and branch, appear in the record presently none the worse for it. The fact of the matter seems to be that, from the death of Moses down to Saul, the Hebrews were barely able to keep a foothold in the new country, were in constant danger of extermination by their neighbors, and were torn by dissensions among themselves. They divided into numerous incoherent tribes, and committed upon each other, as we read in the book of Judges, the atrocities of Bedouins or of wild Indians. Occasionally a chief of some tribe would acquire sufficient prestige to bring under his direction one or two other tribes and do something notable, leaving a name for valor, as in the cases of Gideon and Deborah; but even then the remaining tribes would interpose their jealousies and treacheries, preventing any conclusive triumph out of which the unification of Israel might have become possible.

Through all this obscure period we may be sure the development of the Hebrew religion out of a very crude type went on as slowly as the development of the commonwealth. Those children of the desert cared for no ornate ritual, no refined morality. A

class of seers sprung up, who acted the part of priests and served as oracles, combining zeal for Yahwè with a mercilessness toward the Canaanites, the very thought of which makes the blood run cold. Their chief office seems to have been to fire the people up to fiercest conflicts with their neighbors. The priestly functions performed by them bore no resemblance to what is prescribed in the later Law, but consisted largely in the care of a great fetish called the "ark of the covenant." About this fetish the superstitions of the people gathered for centuries. Its presence in battle, like a Russian icon, was depended on to give victory to its adorers ; or if, in spite of it, the fortunes of war proved adverse, and the ark fell into the hands of the enemy, report says it wrought such mischief among them that they were glad to bring it back to its proper possessors. It was a ticklish thing to handle, and played havoc with its own worshipers if they did not keep at a respectful distance. Thus we have the story that once, when the Philistines were returning the captured ark to the Israelites, the people of a certain town received it with too familiar an affection, venturing to raise the lid and look in. For this temerity 50,000 of them, or, to be exact, 50,070, were smitten dead by the hand of Yahwè himself. A Being as severe as this with his friends

could of course have no mercy on his enemies. They were his best followers who killed the greatest number of the worshipers of some other god. The fault of Saul in the eyes of the prophet Samuel was that he was not sufficiently possessed with the passion of exterminating the neighboring tribes. Thus we are told that when Saul conquered the Amalekites "with great slaughter," Samuel was incensed with him because he spared Agag, the king. He furiously berated Saul, and finally said: "Bring ye hither to me Agag, the king of the Amalekites." In all humility Agag "came to him delicately, and said, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past.'" Upon which, then and there, so reads the account, "Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before Yahwè."

Perhaps through failing to satisfy the religious zealots, perhaps because too early cut off, Saul, though called the first king of Israel, never got control of all the tribes. That distinction was reserved for the more unscrupulous man of blood who succeeded him. David closely filled the prophetic idea of what a royal leader, a "man after Yahwè's own heart," ought to be, and by a series of sanguinary wars made himself a veritable king. At his hand the alien tribes round about, one after another, came to grief, the dominion of Israel was extended in all directions; Jebus, the

site of Jerusalem, and the last stronghold of the Canaanites, was besieged and taken, and there the victorious chieftain established his seat of government. Such distinguished success in arms threw around this king's name a glamour which to this day has made him pass for what he was not. Though a bloody-handed man, guilty of many a crime, he has been reckoned a saint, credited with the authorship of the book of Psalms, and even gospel writers labored to establish the descent of the Messiah from him. He was not, perhaps, worse than many another king of his time; probably had some admirable qualities in addition to his prowess, or he could hardly have so won the lasting affection of his people; but certainly in much that is recorded of him he played the part of an unspeakable barbarian. Queen Victoria's feeling about David did honor to her just discrimination of character. Sir John Robinson is authority for the statement that when, one day, a lady-in-waiting piously ejaculated to her Majesty, "Oh, Madam, how delightful it will be in heaven to see the prophets and saints of the past, to see Aaron and Moses and Elijah and David!" the queen responded instantly and emphatically: "No, no; nobody will ever persuade me to know David." The queen could not get out of her mind the affair of Uriah, or this king's treatment of

prisoners of war, which was rough even for that age. The report makes unpleasant reading, but it should be read, that we may the better measure the wide stretch that religion had yet to compass ere it could perfect itself in sympathy and tenderness. David had captured Rabbah, the Ammonite capital, and here is the account of what he did with the inhabitants : “ He brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln ; and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon ”

How far we are, here, from the teaching : “ Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to them who despitefully use you ” ! how far even from the proverb :

“ Let not kindness and truth forsake thee,  
Bind them about thy neck,  
Write them upon the tablet of thy heart ! ”

Solomon inherited a kingdom and peace, for his father had conquered both and had so ruthlessly treated the vanquished that they could scarcely lift their heads again. He set himself, therefore, to build a city and to gather about him the luxuries of the East. Still, his was a petty kingdom compared with the great powers on either side, and it is very certain that the splendors of his court never were anything

like what the descriptions would have us think. He has been called "the wisest man that ever lived," but of the justice of such a characterization there is no evidence. It is unlikely that he ever busied himself in literary pursuits, and it is extremely doubtful that any word of the Bible is his. The most conservative of candid souls must be gratified by this assurance of the higher criticism, beset as they must always have been with the feeling that a man with seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines must be a singularly unsuitable vehicle for the Holy Ghost, even in a barbaric age. It is fair to say, however, that allowance must be made for exaggeration in Hebrew writers, even as to the weaknesses of their heroes. They never let a story suffer for want of strength, and, for the sake of round numbers, thought nothing, in a case like this, of throwing in half-a-thousand women. They may have said some disparaging things of Solomon from a rankling dislike of his liberality toward foreigners and toward the worship of foreign gods.

The enthusiasms of war united the people, partially under Saul, completely under David, and the old feuds slumbered through Solomon's reign, but only to break out afresh at the news of his death. The northern portion of the kingdom, composed of the most turbu-

lent tribes, revolted. Thenceforth the stream of Hebrew history flows in separate channels for two hundred and fifty-nine years, when the Northern kingdom passes out of existence. These two and a half centuries form a most eventful period, being marked by invasions from the east, the fierce Assyrians at the summit of their power shaking the earth under their tread. In various ways the changed situation resulted in developing wonderfully the people of Israel. The necessities of defense stirred them to a noble patriotism. The vision of the thinkers was widened, and the perils of the nation moved the prophetic spirit to a lofty seriousness. The first utterances of this age of prophecy have not been preserved to us, except in uncertain fragments, and the record of the time is largely encumbered with legend. But from the first quarter of the eighth century the prophets began to write out their utterances, and so left a permanent indication of the condition of things in their time. The so-called "Books of Moses" were not yet written, nor had the historical books that follow in our Bible yet seen the light. Considerable scraps of disconnected tradition—war-songs, myths, legends, law-codes—had probably long been in circulation, destined to be finally embodied in those books, but the books themselves awaited a compiler. This is the

point at which the new criticism has reversed the old theory as to the relative age of the writings as they now stand in the Bible. It was formerly taken for granted that the books were earliest written which deal with the earliest times: a conclusion which no more follows in the case of Hebrew than in the case of English books. We might as well suppose that, since Tennyson's Idylls treat of King Arthur, while Hume's History treats of James and Charles and later rulers, therefore the Idylls must have been written before Hume.

Upon the division of the people after the death of Solomon, numerous kings more or less barbarian followed one another in rapid succession on the throne of the Northern kingdom. Some of these fell into the ways of Solomon and encouraged the worship of foreign gods. The ease with which this lapse from Yahwè-service took place will be understood when we remember that, previous to the middle of the eighth century, nobody in Israel disputed the actual existence of these other gods; they were admittedly as real as Yahwè himself. There was no such belief as monotheism; the sole contention of the first prophets was for the practice of monolatry; they said each people ought to serve its own god, and serve but one. Hebrews ought to worship Yahwè only. To this it

would seem that the ten tribes to the north were, in the beginning of their separate existence, more inclined than were the people of Judah, for from the north came the first indignant protest against the service of other gods than Yahwè. Elijah and Elisha are the names with which it is associated. These men wrote no books; they contented themselves with "smiting the land with the rod of their mouth." Not being sketched by contemporaries, they are enveloped to us in tales of marvel, and we see them but dimly; but we see enough to know that they stood out stoutly for the exclusive worship of Yahwè. They are representatives of the national religion at its best in their time. They freely admitted that there were other gods besides Yahwè, just as real as he, but they were not the gods for Israel to serve. These men were fierce often, and cruel, after the spirit of their time, yet not without their noble points of character. Elijah attained an extraordinary renown, and has remained a conspicuous, half-mythical personage to the present time. The legend has it that he went off to heaven in a chariot of fire; and the superstition has been current among the Jews these thousands of years that he now and then comes back again. A single incident may be taken as showing the type of man he was. It is said that he proposed a miracle-

test with the prophets of Baal, to see which was the mightier god, Baal or Yahwè. Having got together four hundred and fifty Baal-partisans, he challenged them to bring down fire from heaven to consume a sacrifice; and when they couldn't do it, taunted them with their failure in a sufficiently brutal manner, and, according to the story, did it himself. He then took the unhappy four hundred and fifty priests aside and slew them all. This was almost two hundred years after Samuel "hewed Agag to pieces before Yahwè," and improvement here is not marked. \*

It was not long, however, before a fairer spirit was developed. The discipline of those trying years told upon the Hebrew mind and character, and in the next century after Elijah the fruits began to be seen. It was then that Amos, followed soon by Hosea, and a little later by Isaiah and Micah, heralded the arrival of higher ideals and led in the classic period of Hebrew literature. Scribes began to be trained, who gathered together, with emendation, the fragmentary writings — legal regulations, royal records, traditions, myths, and legends — which had long been slowly accumulating, into what, through further extensions,

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\* The account is in I Kings 18:17-40. It seems to have a basis of fact, though there may be exaggeration as to the number of the victims.

grew finally into the books known to us as Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Samuel, and Kings. A developing literary sense made imperative the knitting together of this various material in some connected form. These narratives, notwithstanding their several redactions by different hands, no doubt still retain much of their original character.

We have reached now a period of which we have some authentic account from men who lived in the time of which they wrote, and henceforward there is better agreement among students as to the general course of Jewish history. As to the preceding centuries here hastily sketched, much is necessarily matter of inference; but from traditions which bear all the marks of validity, and from monumental inscriptions, the indications here gathered, culled almost at random from a multitude that point in the same way, abundantly authorize the reconsideration being made in our day of the whole question touching the date, authorship, and purpose of the Old Testament books.

This cursory statement of the ground taken by the new school of criticism has seemed necessary, to make intelligible the more specific application of its principles which will be made in the following chapters. At the very foundation, it will be observed, the doctrine is involved that the Hebrew literature was an

evolution and not a miracle. It would seem that even in the absence of evidence this idea ought to commend itself to every reasonable mind. But the evidence in support of it is of the strongest. If we begin by admitting the old view of the relative age of the books, facts remain, recorded in the books themselves, which still show improvement of religious thought and practice through the early centuries of Jewish history. The course of Joshua, of Samuel, and of Saul, toward the Canaanites, the atrocities of David, the more than Mormon or Mohammedan polygamy of Solomon, contrast so violently with the gentleness and purity of Amos, of Jeremiah, of Ezekiel, that we instinctively revolt at any classification which sets all these men in one and the same category. If, then, a moral and religious progress appears in the records whose authors had no idea of such progress, who labored under the impression that the golden age was behind them, progress may assuredly be taken as an established fact. But, this fact once established, the old theory respecting the age of the several Bible books becomes untenable. It will not do any longer to place the composition of an elaborated system of divine service like Leviticus, or a highly spiritual presentation of the moral law like Deuteronomy, at the beginning. These books could have been written, and

could have been of use, only after the spirit and the modes of the spirit had acquired large development.

And it is to be borne in mind that the strongest possible presumption is on the side of the view here presented ; that, therefore, the field is ours until positive evidence is brought substantiating the old teaching. No such evidence ever has been adduced. That Moses did not write the Pentateuch, Kuenen established thirty-five years ago, as well as a negative can be established. Add to this the fatal fact that no shred of proof is to be found that he did write it, and the present situation of the claim for Mosaic authorship is seen. All we can say is that, in an uncritical age, such an authorship was simply assumed, for a purpose that will be made apparent later on, and that it has since been perpetuated by tradition. Before a scientific study of history and a just criticism, this unsupported assumption falls to the ground ; and with it must go the whole conception of a thoroughly developed system of religion having been given outright to a primitive people. The notion that the Hebrews in their early history were monotheists, having a pure and exalted worship, is akin to the fallacy that the wild North American Indian holds allegiance to one sole Great Spirit. As has been truly said of our Indians, so we may say of the Israel-

ites of the time of their migration to Canaan and for centuries afterward : their religion was little more than a form of demonology They believed in the existence of all the gods they ever heard of, and all were blood-thirsty, treacherous, and terrible. Their preference for Yahwè lay in the fancy that he, while the most terrible of all, was pledged to favor Israel. It was a long step from this to the ethico-spiritual conceptions of Isaiah, and we need not wonder at the length of time spent in taking it

## CHAPTER II.

### The Development of Prophecy.

Civilization and religion of slow growth — A literature presupposes long stages of progress — First Hebrew writings adaptations of Babylonian myths and legends — Distorted conceptions of a far past — Definite history begins with the age of prophecy — The prophetic afflatus — True and false prophets — Pioneer reformers — Work of Elijah — Contention for the worship of Yahwē only — Existence of other gods not questioned — Burnt offerings — Children devoted to the flames — Continued low moral state — Marked advance made by Amos — Hosea denounces the worship of Yahwē under the form of a bull — Micah — Gain of prophecy from Samuel to Isaiah.

T has become a truism with well-informed people that every excellent thing is a product of long stages of development. Nations come to greatness only step by step, and the world is astonished when in any case the steps are other than exceeding slow. Civilization and religion rise out of the primitive savagery through age-long ascending gradations. Lapses there will be, but that changes nothing of the fact that the good is nowhere reached at a bound. This is the ever-recurring lesson of history. There is the strongest presumption, therefore, that the true

story of Israel cannot fail to teach the same lesson. In the absence of complete proof to the contrary it is fair to assume that the Hebrews began their career in a low state of barbarism, just as did the English, the French, the Greeks, the Romans, and every other ancient and modern people. On this fair supposition the history of Israel down to the time of written prophecy has been hastily sketched in the preceding chapter, guided, in the absence of veritable history, by such indications bearing on the subject as are available. These indications, many and various, strongly support the assumption, in itself reasonable, that this nation arose in the process of the centuries from a wild tribe of the desert ; that the noble religion finally attained was arrived at by slow degrees, the starting-point being that low level in which every religion has its earliest root.

Now, while the development of a great literature does not usually keep even pace with the advancement of a people in civilization and in religion, showing surprising outbursts of brilliancy at particular epochs, it yet does come, though less definitely, under the same rule. A crude and barbarous people are not given to writing books. And it is very apparent from their own traditions that the Israelites on their advent into Canaan, and for long after, were barbarians.

Such attempts at writing as they made in those days could have been but reflections and adaptations from the Babylonian literature then current all over hither Asia. Some of these earliest Hebrew documents were incorporated into the Pentateuch later on, and, as they were in the first place derived largely from Babylonian sources, their statements are now occasionally being confirmed by freshly excavated Babylonian inscriptions. We cannot be too glad that the Hebrews borrowed as they did from the older and mightier people; but the borrowing, so far as it went, of course detracts from the originality of these writings. They are not distinctively and absolutely Hebrew literature. In fact there is very little clearly to be called such that can be shown to be of earlier date than 800 b. c. About that time—perhaps a little before—some efforts were made to gather up the floating traditions, oral and written, relating to early times, and to mould them into a connected narrative. As hardly needs to be said, the work was not done scientifically. The editors, or historians, if we may so call them, had no idea of tracing, as would a modern writer, the development of customs, institutions, forms of government and of religion. Their stock of historical material consisted of such Babylonian records of far-anterior time as were at hand and

as could be worked into their scheme of a history, centrally Hebraic, and of traditions and tales more or less legendary, which had been preserved in one way and another by their own people several hundred, some of them possibly a thousand, years. With their age these stories of the fathers had grown in marvellousness, and so the impression was created that in the early time Yahwè had manifested himself much more freely in behalf of his people. Thus the old time came to be thought the best time, the time when Heaven and Earth were in close communion ; and in after centuries it became a great point with the writers of the legal and historical books to make the highly developed post-exilic religion date from the very beginnings of the Hebrew race. From their standpoint this was a natural enough intention, but, as it was in violation of the philosophy of history, it was bound ultimately to frustrate itself. As plainly appears now, the traditions, many of them, do not at all fit into such a scheme ; on the contrary, they serve to discredit the theory of these writers and help us to rectify their representation. We find enough authentic recollections recorded to show that the Hebrews were uncivilized on their first appearance in history ; that they were then fetish-worshippers ; afterwards fire-worshippers ; that they believed in many gods of whom

Yahwè was chief, or at least the one they could best depend on ; that they worshiped him under the form of a bull ; that the custom was long prevalent among them of offering human sacrifices. The writers have woven into their own record facts which prove their theory of history a mistaken one, and make it plain that they carried back into the age of Moses ideas and institutions which belong to an age some six hundred years later.

This being the case, it is in order now to consider the condition of Israel in the eighth century B. C , the time of the first prophets whose words we have under their own hands. For this purpose we have reliable data in the writings of the prophets themselves, and in the historical books written during this period.

The prophetic age, it is to be observed, was subsequent to the disruption of the kingdom after Solomon. For, though Moses is loosely called a prophet, and seers and soothsayers had never been wanting, one and all were without the quality of inspiration which distinguished the true Hebrew prophet of history. The ancients all had their oracles of more or less repute, as have many moderns,— augurs, fortunetellers, diviners, medicine-men, mediums, clairvoyants, as they are variously termed,— to whom the people resorted for light on dark questions. Down to the

time of Samuel, we are told, these persons were called seers. They might fitly have worn the name longer. In after centuries men of higher type arose, and the nobler title of prophet suited the advance made from vulgar soothsaying to wise leadership of the people and the counseling of kings. This advance we may be sure was slow; the seers of the eleventh, and the prophets of the tenth and ninth centuries B. C., were unavoidably superstitious, sometimes bloody-handed men. We find in Samuel, who belongs, it is true, to the class of seers or clairvoyants, small traces of that high moral quality which draws us to the great prophets of the eighth century. His associates and successors, for a hundred years and more, were of the class of diviners and fortune-tellers who belong to every age, given to dreams and trances. Their prophesying was a form of religious frenzy such as is seen in the modern dervishes; they believed themselves seized by the spirit of God, which compelled them to prophesy. "The spirit of God" in this connection means simply (in the words of Canon Cheyne), "a fanatical impulse to do honor to Yahwè by putting aside all the restraints of civil life and social custom, and acting like a madman till physical exhaustion brings the fit of frenzy to an end." While these dervish-like features were never wholly abandoned by

the prophets even in their best days, they were ultimately toned down and subordinated to other considerations. But improvement was slow. The people mostly preferred the old style of prophet with his contortions, his paroxysms of "possession," which seemed conclusively to show that some supernatural afflatus had swept over him; and so this sort were ever the more numerous, the orthodox party. They prophesied to please the king or whoever it might be that inquired of them; did their work for pay; served their own interests. They upbraided nobody, promised success, preached optimism with every breath. But as time went on and troubles came, here and there a man of firm conviction and real consecration arose who looked not to his own interests, cared only for his people, would not prophesy smooth things to please them, and saw in their misfortunes only the just punishment for their sins. When such a one happened also to be endowed with great abilities he forced himself into consideration, made his mark upon his age.

But prophecy as it rose in dignity and value became pessimistic. The voices of the men of God flamed in condemnation of what they saw about them. Nathan could boldly venture to rebuke King David for some of his shameful actions; Ahijah, shocked by

Solomon's tolerance of heathen worship in Jerusalem, appears to have instigated the rebellion of the Northern tribes, and prompted among them a more exclusive devotion to Yahwè. Jeroboam, we know, built up the sacred places there, and established two temples for the greater convenience of the people dwelling at either extremity of his kingdom. In each of these he placed the gilded image of a bull, representing Yahwè, a sort of imagery which had always been more or less in vogue among the Israelites, and which thus far, it would seem, had aroused no protest. One wonders what those pioneer reformers, Elijah and Elisha, who lived in this time, thought of this bull-worship. They seem not to have been offended by it ; there is no evidence that they said anything against it. Their war was against other gods and the images of other gods ; they made no fight against images of Yahwè. We may therefore conclude that these prophets saw nothing reprehensible in worshiping Yahwè under the form of a bull. Accustomed to it from childhood, it probably never struck them as other than the proper thing. Obviously they knew nothing of any prohibitory commandment regarding graven images.

These two prophets are not to be thought of as the only ones of their time. We have an account of four

hundred being called in those very days to the court of the king of Israel to pronounce oracularly on the expediency of a war. They were of the short-sighted, smooth-speaking party, which appears to have outnumbered the higher order through all the period of prophecy ; and of course they warmly encouraged the king in the enterprise on which he had set his heart. Only one man could anywhere be found with courage to voice an opposing oracle ; but that one man of the better vision left his name on record, which is more than can be said of any one of the four hundred (I. Kings 22 : 5-17).

Of the two conspicuous characters who really enunciated a scheme of reform and set prophetism on its great career, it is necessary to speak more particularly. We cannot be very precise, because they wrote no books,\* and because the record of their doings was made a century or so after their death, and consequently is confused with much that is legendary. Of these legendary stories — the prophet's power to bring or withhold rain, his being fed by ravens, the miraculous renewing of the widow's meal and oil, the calling back to life of her dead son, the

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\* The only biblical claim that Elijah wrote anything is in II Chronicles 21 12-15, and this appeared some six hundred years after his time

feast spread by an angel for the starving man of God, and other marvels connected with him — it is just to say, they are such as attach themselves only to great religious leaders, and, though beyond belief to the modern mind, are to be taken as the tribute of a subsequent generation seeking to atone for neglect of an extraordinary personality. Similar testimony was put on record regarding Moses, and, much later, in the case of Jesus. Through the fictitious halo, some traces of the real person may be caught. Thus, in the story of the annihilation by fire from heaven of two companies of soldiers sent to arrest Elijah, we have what appears to be a true portrait of him, as a stern ascetic wrapped in a robe of goat's or camel's hair, gathered at the waist by a strap (II. Kings 1 : 8-12). We also make out clearly from the record what was the main motive of his preaching, — it was to extirpate in Israel the worship of any other god than Yahwè. One might think that five hundred years after Moses this ought not to be a formidable task, but such a notion does not take into account the tremendous influence of a surrounding civilization in most respects decidedly superior to that of the Israelites. In the whole mass of his people Elijah calculated there were not more than seven thousand who worshiped only Yahwè; the rest bowed

the knee to Baal or some other foreign god. For these apostates, who made up almost the entire nation, he saw nothing but destruction. Accordingly, in disastrous wars, in pestilence and famine, decimating the people, there seemed to him to be the hand of Yahwè avenging the neglect of his altar. He hears the voice of Yahwè commanding him to go to Damascus and anoint Hazael, the fiercest enemy of Israel, to be king of Syria, and then to anoint the terrible Jehu to be king of Israel, that between the two a general slaughter might be made, to be supplemented, if need be, by the hand of his associate, Elisha; for, says Yahwè, "It shall come to pass that him who escapeth from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay, and him who escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. There shall only be left the seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." When Ahab on political grounds had formed an alliance with Tyre, as an act of courtesy he permitted the Tyrians resident in his capital to have a temple there, dedicated to Baal; an act which furiously aroused the indignation of Elijah. It happened that an uncommon drouth followed the building of this temple (the occurrence of the drouth is independently attested in a fragment of Menander of Ephesus, quoted by Josephus), and the tradition has it that Elijah foretold it, and indeed

brought it on in punishment of this recognition of a foreign god. The substratum of truth doubtless is, Elijah interpreted the drouth as a sign of the divine displeasure.

Modern critics are not disposed to think that Yahwè-worship in the ninth century was reduced so low as to have only seven thousand adherents out of a population of some millions, and certainly there was never a slaughter that swept away all but this remnant. Nor is there any reason to think that, in the disasters which came, the minority of the faithful fared any better than the rest. What did happen as a result of Elijah's preaching was a deepening of the national religious consciousness, a great strengthening of Yahwè-worship as the one fitting cult of Israel, and an ineffaceable revelation at the opportune moment of an ideal of prophecy high and heroic for that age.

Elisha, the associate and successor of Elijah, is a less striking because a much less original figure. His history is involved in a similar circle of myth and marvel, from which he nowhere stands out as clearly as does at times his greater master. Still, to judge from the half-legendary account, he filled for many years an important place in public affairs, during a troublesome period, maintaining fairly well the dignity

of the office of chief prophet created by Elijah. He kept up the contention for the exclusive worship of Yahwè, though apparently with somewhat less rigor and vigor. There was certainly no advance on the other's position; no exception taken to the use of images; no declaration of monotheism. No voice had yet ventured to say: There is one God and only one. It was universally held by the prophets, and always had been held, that the gods of other nations were actual persons, rivals of Yahwè; and the utmost advance that had been made was to assert that Yahwè was jealous of them, that he was the patron god of the Hebrews, and that therefore they ought to worship him alone. Some, feeling that he was more righteous than Baal and the rest, more a lover of justice and kindness and truth, may have arisen, but such a feeling did not much come to expression. Nobody dreamed of pretending, either that "Baal" and "Chemosh" and "Zeus" were names of mere fictions of the imagination, or that they, with "Yahwè," were simply different names for the same Being; they were universally believed to be names of diverse and distinct personalities. Solomon, when he built his temple to Yahwè, had generously provided for the worship of all the gods known to the people of Jerusalem; and, though he may have carried his liberality to a rather

extreme degree, he seems at the time not to have been severely censured. We know of the subsequent kings that several were worshipers of foreign gods, one of them, Ahaz, in the latter half of the eighth century, going so far as to sacrifice his own child to Molech ("made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen" \*), an example followed by his grandson Manasseh forty-four years later.† Such hideous things in high places make it pretty certain that the people generally were doing no better. Not that the worship of Yahwè, at any time during these centuries, was given up; his worship was continued along with that of other gods. Even where in response to the demands of the early prophets the service of other gods was excluded, it was not on the ground of their non-existence, but on the ground that, since Yahwè was Israel's God, Israel ought to serve him, just as every nation ought to serve its own deity. Thus when the king of the Amorites asked for the recession of a certain territory which Israel had conquered in the early wars, it was argued that the land should not be given up, because in the old time Yahwè had fairly wrested it from Chemosh. This is the

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\* II. Kings 16. 3.

† II. Kings 21. 6. On meaning of "to pass through the fire," see Ezek. 16. 20, 21.

argument, which, though one-sided, shows how the people regarded the gods of other nations : "The God of Israel dispossessed the Amorites of this land, and gave it to his people Israel. Wilt thou not possess what Chemosh, thy god, giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever Yahwè drives out before us, them will we possess" (*Judges 11: 23, 24*). This is an incident of the period of the Judges, but there is every reason to believe that similar notions of the reality of the various gods, and of their relations to their people, held on to a late day. We have it related, for example, that when the kings of Israel and of Judah marched together upon Moab, and were in a fair way to reduce the capital of that heathen land, the king of Moab in his extremity sacrificed his son and heir to Chemosh; whereupon the might of that god was revealed, and the combined forces of Israel and Judah, though accompanied by the prophet Elisha who wrought the most stupendous miracles, were forced to raise the siege (*II. Kings 3: 27*).

While the foreign gods were felt to be so real and so powerful it is no wonder that they were more or less worshiped. Another fact also goes far to explain a persistent inclination of the people in that direction : the ceremonies which came to be considered heathen-

ish were, many of them, originally associated with the worship of Yahwè. This Being was early thought of as *light* and *fire*, a conception which survived in poetry, furnishing the most striking symbols. We read that "the glory of Yahwè was like devouring fire on the top of Mount Sinai"; that "his angel appeared in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush"; that in the desert, for the guidance of the Israelites, "Yahwè went before them in a cloud by day, and by night in a pillar of fire"; we even find it said with explicitness: "Thy God is a consuming fire." Figurative as these expressions may be, time was when such language was not figurative. In that early time worshipers of Yahwè offered their children to him,—that is, to the flames. The burning of sacrifices, so constant a feature of all ancient religions, points to a time when the flame that received the offering was identical with the god who was to be propitiated thereby. The ritual of the Yahwè-cult early rejected the custom of making human sacrifices, but the people retained some predilection for the fiery rites, and, when barred from the celebration of the more horrible of these rites in the service of their own God, they would sometimes adopt for the moment the ways of their neighbors. Down to a late day, under the name of Molech, they perpetuated in its literalness the idea

that God is a devouring fire \* We may in a measure, therefore, understand why the later prophets found it necessary to combat so stoutly a practice which seemed to hold on into an age where it did not belong. It had the persistence of an aboriginal tendency. The same consideration goes far to explain the, to the prophets, exasperating readiness of the people to lapse into the service of other gods besides Molech — Ashera, Milcom, Chemosh, and the rest. These orders of worship, however widely separated at last from Yahwism, were originally of the same family. In the steady advance of the latter into a more ethical, spiritual faith, many, who could not follow, naturally fell into other cults which remained relatively stationary.

We would like to know more definitely the moral condition of the people toward the end of the eighth century, when prophetism came to full development ; what part morality played in their sense of religious obligation. If, as many still think, the Ten Commandments came from the hand of Moses (exception at any rate must be made of the Second, the prohibition of

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\* From what neighbors the Israelites derived the horrid rite of "passing their children through the fire" no one pretends to say. It may have been original with them Dr G F MOORE says. "The only seat of this cult of which we have certain historical knowledge is Jerusalem." Compare Amos 5 26

graven images\*), then the religion of Israel took a strong ethical cast from the outset. Moreover it is certain that the worship of Yahwè was never notorious for such immoralities as disgraced the temples of some other gods of the period. Still, though society was probably better regulated in Israel than elsewhere, the terrific impeachment brought by the eighth-century prophets compels us to think that public and private morality was generally low. The notion had not yet been developed of a direct connection between faithfulness to Yahwè and faithfulness to justice, truth, and purity.

Somewhere about the close of the first quarter of the eighth century, Amos, a shepherd, left the tending of his sheep, under the conviction that he had a message to his people from Yahwè. It came over him, as it had not over any of his predecessors, that Yahwè was a righteous God, and that righteousness

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\* This on the ground of the unrestricted use of images of Yahwè for five hundred years after Moses. The tradition is that through Moses were given "Ten Words," ten declarations, and there are ten without this, counting as the first, "I am Yahwè, thy God," etc. The expression, *Ten Words*, implies that these declarations were very brief, most of them doubtless originally much shorter than as they now stand, certainly those touching the Sabbath, reverence for parents, and covetousness. Suspicion is at once cast on the Second by its length—ninety-three words in the English version—running into a regular exhortation.

is the one acceptable service of him His soul was pained to see the people punctilious in observances but unscrupulous in conduct ; careful of the ritual but careless of honor, of purity, and of truth. He could see nothing but destruction for a nation given to such ways, and he went up and down the country saying so. Though apparently a native of Judah, he betook himself to the then more important Northern kingdom that went by the name of Israel, and denounced the king in his own sacred place of Bethel For this the chief priest procured his expulsion from the kingdom, but could not bring him to silence. He left, proclaiming the speedy overthrow of the king and the deportation of his subjects Finding that men would not hear his spoken words, he wrote out the main points of his prophecy, thus becoming "the earliest of the prophets of whose discourses and predictions we possess written records with an accompanying statement of their authorship." It is only a small book ; it would make hardly more than three columns of one of our daily newspapers — even less than that, leaving out the additions made by other hands, for, like all other ancient books, of which the originals were perishable, it has been at the mercy of copyists and editors. But enough of his genuine words remain to prove him an exalted and original spirit,

with the gift of refined and forceful expression. Prophecy, at the moment it began to be written, took an upward flight, acquired a wider view.

In the next generation arose a yet more vigorous if a less refined spirit, the prophet Hosea, mastered by the same convictions, seeing the hollowness of the people's piety, the wickedness of their lives, and pouring out against them fiery denunciations. Like Amos, he saw nothing but ruin for such a people, they were too far gone for repentance; priests, prophets, and all were fit only to be cast out. So dark and hopeless was his picture, so sweeping his declaration of impending divine vengeance, that later hands have felt impelled to make additions pointing to a final happy issue. The whole book bearing his name is, in bulk, less than four ordinary newspaper columns. The most of it, all the threatening, denunciatory part, is his; the later insertions are those cheerful, encouraging verses preferred by modern readers. But in the gloom of Hosea there is a brilliancy rarely matched in the Bible or elsewhere. Such a rapid and astonishing succession of pictures, vivid and appalling, fairly takes one's breath away. He is a maker of epigrammatic phrases, some of which, such as "like people, like priest," "sow the wind and reap the whirlwind," are still in frequent

use. In Hosea we come upon the first condemnation of the custom in vogue for centuries of representing Yahwè in the form of an ox or bull, the worship of golden calves. But we must observe that neither Amos nor Hosea arrives at monotheism ; there are still many gods besides Yahwè ; Yahwè is not the God and Maker of all the world. Even Micah, who came a little later and companioned with Isaiah, got no further at this point, for he concludes the passage (assuming it to be really his), descriptive of the days when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, with the declaration that then "all the peoples will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of Yahwè, our god, for ever and ever." Of Micah we know very little ; the word he has left is of the briefest, and this has been freely tampered with by the editors to soften down its tone of pessimism. The real Micah had the same abhorrence of the existing situation, the hollow formalities, the worship of images, and the prevailing immorality, as had his two great predecessors. As, in the judgment of able critics, his genuine words do not extend beyond the first four chapters, with some late insertions even in them, it is evident that we have but the merest fragment of his utterances. The same is to be said of all three of the prophets here treated ;

and it need not disturb us that the passages in these precious remnants most to our modern taste are frequently the very ones pronounced by the critics additions by later hands. The independent value of a noble utterance is not affected by the age of it; and we gain nothing by attributing to the very ancient, thoughts beyond the reach of their time. The great paragraph (6 : 6-8) closing with the words : "What doth Yahwè require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God ?" loses no whit of its majesty by the admission that it is some hundreds of years younger than the real sayings of Micah.

We are now arrived at the time of Isaiah, in whom prophecy reached a very high development and found perhaps its greatest genius. His work, and that of his successors of the seventh and sixth centuries, is of such importance as to require separate treatment.

—A word only as to the figure and function to which prophecy had now attained. Beginning in the sooth-saying, the divining, the magic common among all primitive peoples and surviving vulgarly in all civilizations, accompanied often by peculiar nervous derangements, convulsions, catalepsy, and so forth, it rose to dignity in Israel by becoming, in the hands of a few really great men, an enginery of moral and religious

reform. These men inherited the conviction that the seer is in direct communication with Yahwè, speaks as he is directed by Yahwè, and this conviction was deepened in them through the consecration of their lives to his service in all purity and earnestness. So completely did they hold themselves as the mere vehicles of his controlling Spirit that they often represent him as being himself the speaker. So sure are they that it is Yahwè speaking, they are not dismayed when their forecastings fail; they simply infer that Yahwè, of his supreme good pleasure, has changed his mind or delayed the fulfillment. But the prophets' and the people's faith is so entire that the prophetic word itself has an inherent energy going far to work its own fulfillment, actually bringing the threatened woes or promised blessings. We may imagine the terror inspired by such a word as this: "Thus saith Yahwè, God of hosts, 'Is not my word as fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?'" or as this: "Thus saith Yahwè, God of hosts, 'I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.'" At any rate, in the hands of these great men, foretelling became wholly subsidiary to great moral and religious aims. Their main purpose was to turn the people from errors and sins.

## CHAPTER III

### The Three Extended Prophecies.

Isaiah, the son of Amoz — The book bearing his name a composite work — Accretions by other hands in the first half — Principal part of the latter half added by exiles in Babylonia — Optimism of this part — Affirmation of monotheism clearly made — Three minor prophets — Jeremiah — The prophecy that goes by his name also a composite — His mode of writing — His denunciation of foreign gods — His wise political counsel, neglect of which led to the destruction of Jerusalem — Ezekiel, captive priest and prophet in Babylon — Sagaciously exempts Babylon from his denunciations, which fall upon all other foreigners — Expects return of captives to Palestine — Provides regulations for worship there — Formulates an impracticable scheme for parcelling out the land to the twelve tribes — Order of value of the three principal books of prophecy

**W**E are now face to face with one of the great monuments of Hebrew literature, the book of Isaiah. No book has ever been the subject of more painstaking study, and none, perhaps, has better rewarded the student. Scholars of a previous generation readily perceived that the book divides itself into two nearly equal parts, and they ascribed the latter half to an unknown writer of the time of the exile in Babylonia. A few passages here

and there were assigned to intervening dates, the body of the first half standing as the work of Isaiah the son of Amoz, who prophesied in the last forty years of the eighth and the first decade of the seventh century B.C. But studies made since 1880 have materially changed our idea of the situation. The best scholarship has it now that the whole work is a composite, to which many hands contributed through a period of more than five hundred years; that the man whose name it bears wrote scattered prophecies, which were gathered up and supplemented by his disciples, this nucleus receiving emendations and increments from one and another of their successors through the centuries. We have, therefore, the work, not of one prophet, but of a dozen or twenty prophets and editors, covering more topics from more points of view than would have been possible for one man.

Of Isaiah personally we know more than of any of the preceding or contemporary prophets. Unlike Micah, unlike Amos and Hosea, he was a person of rank, holding a high social position in Jerusalem; a circumstance which afforded him a securer basis of influence than they possessed. Of equal purity, fearlessness, and devotion, he had greater sagacity, a clearer vision. He was happily situated in life, his means apparently ample, his domestic relations all he

could desire,—his wife a prophetess, his sons prophets,—honored by the people hardly less than the king himself, whose natural counselor he was as the chief spokesman of Yahwè. He lived in a most important and trying part of the history of the two kingdoms, exercising for fifty years the functions of foremost prophet. So great and so active a mind must have made many telling utterances in that time, enough to fill many volumes. Of these utterances he wrote out a few, a few more of them were taken down by his disciples, and in after years some one gathered what there were into a little collection, with explanatory introductions and connecting links. Such a book, while regarded with reverence by the faithful, would have none of the inviolable sanctity of a "sacred book," and would be open to emendation from time to time by other prophets speaking by a similar inspiration. Vaticinations which had conspicuously failed of fulfillment would naturally be dropped out, and denunciations which in the changed temper of the time seemed too severe would be modified or supplemented by tenderer, more hopeful strains. Thus while the written words of Isaiah could in the first place have been but a fragment of the great man's public utterances, those written words, through elisions and insertions, became less and less represent-

ative of him, so that when, in the second century B.C., the work attained its present shape, more than three-fourths of the book going under the name of Isaiah was by other hands than his.

This is substantially what might reasonably be expected to happen, and it is precisely what literary criticism has proved to have happened. Dr. Cheyne, who, better than any one else, knows this book, credits about one-fifth of it to the original Isaiah, holding the first eight chapters to be mainly his; from this point on, here and there a fragment as far as to chapter 32; the two whole chapters 18 and 22. The eight chapters, 32-39, he regards as very late work, some of it as late as the age of the Maccabees. The last four of these chapters purport to be historical, and are just such history as we should expect to find written in the third century covering a period of the eighth century. It is there that we have the story of "the angel of Yahwè" raising the siege of Jerusalem by going into the camp of the Assyrians and smiting 185,000 men, so that, as the authorized version has it, "when they arose early in the morning they were all dead corpses." It is there that we have the yet more astounding story of the shadow on the royal sun-dial being made to move backwards ten degrees as a sign to a sick king that his life would be prolonged fifteen

years.\* Such accounts never belong to the time in which the scene is laid, but to a long subsequent period

At the 40th chapter we come upon an entirely different order of prophecy, the work of Jewish captives in Babylonia. The original Isaiah, like the other eighth-century prophets, was oppressed with a sense of coming national disaster. The Assyrian power was reaching out to the westward and crushing all the little kingdoms; the doom of Israel impended; it might be delayed, it could not be averted. According to the prophetic habit of thought, this doom was attributable to the sins of the people, was a punishment for their neglect of the service of Yahwè. Such a mode of interpreting a purely political situation gave to those early prophets an austerity, a hopelessness, relieved only by their high moral purpose and their still unfailing confidence in God. They stood in the attitude of men facing a dread calamity which is but a just retribution, burdened with a fearful anticipation of judgment. A century and a half later, when the blow had fallen and the first agony was past, the people in exile began to pluck up hope, and to look for a deliverer who should redeem them from

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\* These marvels are told also in II. Kings 19: 35; 20: 11.

captivity Their prophets began to voice this hope, and an order of prophecy arose contrasting strongly with the old, a bugle-call to great and glorious things. Some of these utterances, doubtless the noblest, are preserved to us here, striking a wholly new note, commencing with the words : "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." The writer sees signs of deliverance from captivity, and pictures in glowing colors the return of the people to their own land, the rebuilding of cities and temples, the re-establishment of the throne of David with power such as David never knew, the coming of all the kingdoms of the world to do homage at Jerusalem. So jubilant a song no Jew had ever sung before. It runs through nine chapters. Then follow six chapters which some critics think are mainly by the same author or authors, attributed by others to another prophet, writing partly in Babylonia, partly in Jerusalem ; in either case they have received later additions and emendations The remaining eleven chapters are certainly by other hands, and were written, for the most part, about the middle of the fifth century B. C.\*

By far the most remarkable of these supplementary

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\* The peculiar passage, 63 7-64 12, is believed to date from the shameful persecution inflicted by Artaxerxes Ochus about the middle of the fourth century.

parts is that written anonymously in Babylonia by one (or by a group) known now as the Second Isaiah. There the Jewish theology reaches a very high development; Yahwè becomes the God, not of Israel only, but of all nations, and every people is destined to come to his worship. The glory of Israel is to reveal to the whole world the eternal Power and Providence, the Maker and Friend of man. Thus culminates the spiritual perception whose growth we have been tracing through the centuries from the time when Yahwè was only one of countless gods, furious and vengeful, contending with one another for the supremacy. It was necessarily a slow and difficult process. The idea of monotheism was not readily reached, and when reached, the assumption on the part of any one people that theirs was the only true God had a look of narrow-mindedness and conceit from which good men shrank. It was something that could only be done by and for a people who had demonstrated their moral and spiritual superiority, and had in hand the evidences — the great characters and great literary achievements. By the end of the sixth century a jubilant soul, speaking from the very summit of prophecy, could without conceit make the daring declaration.

It is the hopefulness of the Second Isaiah (using this designation for the unknown writer or writers), so

contrasting with the tone of all his predecessors, that makes him attractive to modern readers. But as the world went in those days, the man who looked for the best did not ordinarily show the truest foresight. It was safer to predict catastrophes than triumphs. The exuberant optimism of this prophet led him to picture a coming glory for Israel that was never realized. There was a return of some of the captives to Palestine in the fifth century, but their condition there never had the remotest resemblance to the prophet's exultant representations. Indeed, so violent was the contrast, his words seemed to them a mockery, filled them with a heart-sickness. But now that these disappointments are long past, we read the glowing pages of this poet-prophet of the captivity with unqualified admiration of his courage, of his hope, and of his rapt imagination.

Thus it is seen that a consideration of the book of Isaiah carries us over a long period—more than five hundred years—during which it was being written and brought to its present shape. We are carried in fact far beyond the great age of prophecy, down into a time of very inferior work, some little of which has found its way into this book. The main part, however, is by the master minds, and the book as a whole rather gains than suffers in not being entirely by the

son of Amoz. Of course there is an entire sacrifice of unity ; but there is, on the other hand, the advantage of a many-sidedness, coming from many different points of view. We may well wish that we knew the names of some of the chief builders after Isaiah in this literary construction, — though feeling that it is no small tribute to his greatness, the readiness of so many to sink their separate distinction that they might swell the glory of his name.

After Isaiah the son of Amoz we have no name of prophet for near a hundred years. The very greatness of his reputation may have stood in the way of others acquiring renown in the same field. Three prophets, seldom mentioned now, are generally assigned to the last quarter of the seventh century, each on the strength of a leaflet of two or three little pages bearing his name, — Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk. Of Nahum nothing whatever is known beyond his leaflet, of which but about half is considered genuine. All we know of Zephaniah personally is his own statement that he was a descendant in the fourth generation from Hezekiah, but whether he meant the king of that name is uncertain. What these two left behind, slight as it is, has the virtue of being intelligible. But Habakkuk, who is equally unknown except in legend, is obscure to the modern reader.

Another and far greater name of the same period, standing out clearly through a vista of twenty-five hundred years, draws all eyes away from these.

Jeremiah comes into view in the year 625 B. C., from which it is inferred that he was born about the middle of the seventh century. His father was a priest of Anathoth, a village now called Anata, a little way to the northeast of Jerusalem, not in sight of the city, but looking down on the Dead Sea and the lower Jordan — a prospect answering well to his sad and austere spirit. In early manhood he became convinced that God had made him a messenger to the people, appointed him a prophet unto the nations. He is reported to have shrunk away from the responsibility and spoken of himself as incapable, as only a child. Then a voice within him, the voice of Yahwè, responded: "Say not, 'I am a child'; for on whatever errand I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid" To render assurance doubly sure Yahwè, we are told, put forth his hand and touched his mouth, saying, "I have put my words in thy mouth: see, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to build and to plant." From this time on through forty years he spoke as though clothed with this authority.

There was once apparently a "Biography of Jeremiah," and from this it appears that the compilers of the book of Jeremiah drew, for the personal reminiscences of the prophet scattered through it. The Biography may long have had a separate existence, and been the source from which were taken the quotations of this prophet, in Maccabees and the New Testament, which are not to be found in the existing book of Jeremiah \*

It is not possible to suppose that Jeremiah wrote all of the book that goes by his name; in fact there is no certainty that with his own hand he wrote any of it. As has been well said, "this prophet was not a holy penman, but a preacher of righteousness" There are indications that writing was irksome to him; that he spoke with ease, but preferred to leave the taking down of his words to others. Thus it is reported (30: 2) that Yahwè commanded him, "Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book" But a year or so after, when he needed such a book to present to the king, he had not yet made one, and, according to the story, when commanded again to do so, put the work off on another (36: 2, 32). It is very certain that only a small part, if

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\* II. Macc. 2: 1 ff., Matt 27: 9

indeed any, of the book as we have it, was written during the lifetime of the prophet. The writing grew through the centuries, much as we have seen that the book of Isaiah grew. It came out in booklets of a few pages, published after his death at considerable intervals, the first to appear being naturally the most authentic. The beginning of each of these originally separate collections is marked by the superscription, nearly uniform : "The word which came to Jeremiah from Yahwè"; and of these, eight or ten are readily made out. The first in order in the book are usually the oldest chapters ; though not always, for the original order has been somewhat changed by late editors.

It would be interesting to know what part of the writings bearing the name of Jeremiah really came from him. Two opposing facts confront us at the outset of such an investigation, *viz.* : This prophet was not given to writing ; the writings in question are voluminous,—longer than any other book of the Bible, save only the book of Psalms. If we are to credit the statements in the 36th chapter, it would appear that twenty-two years after he commenced to prophesy he had not yet written a word, nor had anybody else taken down his utterances. What under these circumstances he is reported to have done, whether historical or not, is important as indicating

the way in which it was deemed possible to make good enough records in those days. Jeremiah, without a scrap of writing, without a note of date or occasion, sits down with Baruch, his companion, pressed into service as amanuensis, and they together undertake to recall and write out all the public utterances of Jeremiah made in the preceding twenty-two years! Obviously such a writing could not have been very extensive. However good the memory of the two men, they would not be able to recover a hundredth part of his sayings. Still, what under such circumstances was written out would at least have the virtue of being his, whether or not it was exactly what he said on the various occasions referred to. So, too, what was written down after his death by the disciples who had heard his spoken words would surely preserve some flavor of the original utterances. But this is more than can be said of large additions made by men of long subsequent generations. In a general way it may be said that the first twenty chapters contain considerable that is the prophet's own. The same may be said with less positiveness of the next four chapters. Beyond the 24th chapter there is little, probably, that Jeremiah would recognize as his if he were to see it. Much of the last half of the book was written as late as the latter part of the second

century B. C. Six chapters (40–44 and 52) cover a period outside the time limitation set in the book itself (1:3). The last chapter is copied with slight variations from the closing part of the Second Book of Kings. Another considerable addition is what is called The Lamentations of Jeremiah, joined to the prophecy in some old versions, but separated in our bibles. These poems used to be considered the work of the prophet, and they have created the legend of him as a mournful figure pouring out rivers of tears. In fact they are far removed from his simple, straightforward style, being poems of a highly artificial type, mostly acrostics in the original, efforts at fine writing not in his line. They are a series of wailings akin to certain of the Psalms, called out by the successive disasters which overtook the Jews in the centuries after the exile.

From words which may with reason be taken for actual utterances of Jeremiah, it appears that, notwithstanding the efforts of prophets from Elijah's time to his, the worship of heathen gods still largely prevailed in Judah. He boldly accuses the people of having as many gods as they had towns : "According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah!" Of all these he is very contemptuous, calling them stocks and stones, the lifeless handiwork of their

own stupid worshipers This marks a radical change from earlier conceptions. The worship of Yahwè under the form of a golden or, rather, gilded calf, which had prevailed in the Northern kingdom, ended with the extinction of that kingdom by the Assyrians in the year 722 b c In Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah the Yahwè-ritual, looked after by a great number of priests, had grown ever more elaborate, and was surely crowding the pagan cults to the wall Nevertheless the public morals, judged by Jeremiah's standard, were low, and the national calamities which he clearly saw impending were, in his thought, but the just and inevitable penalty of his people's sins. This reasoning made the Babylonian invader the minister of Yahwè, and even led the prophet, when Jerusalem was besieged, to counsel capitulation, thus bringing himself under plausible charge of disloyalty. But never was a truer patriot, and few have suffered more for their country. The certain doom hanging over his people was to him a life-long agony, unrelieved by any hope of rescue. The touches of hope thrown in here and there, the famous foretelling of a return from captivity after seventy years, are not his, but later accretions, *post-eventum* prophecies. After all the services of the great man, he is lost sight of in the general confusion

at the fall of Jerusalem, and we are without knowledge as to what was his end.

The old Christian reckoning of greater prophets included four, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. But Daniel has declined in importance under modern criticism, and has lost such rank. It remains, therefore, for the present, to consider only the life and work of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel was a younger contemporary of Jeremiah. He belonged to the priestly order, and his early years were spent in the temple at Jerusalem in preparation for the functions of the priestly office. He was probably yet only a young man at the time Jerusalem fell into the hands of Nebuchadrezzar, when, with a considerable number of the more important people of the city, he was carried off to Babylon. This was in the year 597 B.C. He never again saw his native land, spending his days at Tel-abib with the other captives, whose numbers were swollen by subsequent deportation of Jews from Palestine. The new experiences brought him to feel that he was made for more than a priest, and in the year 592 came the strong conviction that he was called to be a prophet. In answering the call he did not relinquish the priesthood, and he has the distinction of being the last of the great prophets known to

us by name, and the first of the great priests. But for six years he made no prophetic public utterance, contenting himself, for that length of time, in writing the first twenty-four chapters of his book. The motive of this silence is not apparent. Perhaps he was overawed by the fame of Jeremiah; perhaps he preferred to keep back his forecast of the terrible fate of Jerusalem till time should determine whether he was correct; at any rate he held his peace until the voice of his venerable predecessor was hushed in the overthrow and destruction of the city. He then published what he had written; and, as he had opportunity, presumably he revised and retouched. His denunciations of Jerusalem for idolatry and wickedness are bitter and furious in the extreme. Her sins exceed those of Sodom, and no symbols to which he can turn his tongue are vile enough to represent her. In his indelicacies he outdoes even Hosea.\* One cannot but think that these prophecies, published after the event, were colored to make the terrible fate of the city seem not an undue punishment, painting her black enough so that she might seem to have got only her just deserts at the hand of Yahwè.

The next eight chapters (25-32) are predictions

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\* Chapter 16 *passim*, notably verse 25

of the destruction of foreign nations, all that have troubled Israel, big and little, save only Babylon. Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, favors Babylon purely on political grounds ; it is not pretended that she is any better than the rest religiously or morally. They saw there the conquering power, in which alone could their people hope for anything short of utter destruction ; to go against Babylon was to go to certain ruin. The rest of the known world was to be mercilessly exterminated or reduced to humble vassalage. Babylon was to be the destroying power, the instrument of the vengeance of Yahwè. Indeed, the one purpose of inflicting all this destruction, reiterated continually in the predictions, is, that the people destroyed "may know that I am Yahwè" This does not seem to the modern reader a perfectly satisfactory motive ; but we may at least see in 'it the rising conviction, apparent also in Jeremiah, that Yahwè is in reality the one and only God. But Ezekiel is far from intimating that Yahwè cares anything for foreign peoples. He cares not particularly for individuals of any race. His dealing is with nations.

Having, in his predictions, disposed of other nations, the prophet turns in the next chapters (33-39) to the moral instruction and consolation of his fellow-captives. So terrible had been the experiences through

which they had passed, and so profoundly were they impressed by the prophetic representation of their sufferings as but the just penalty of their idolatries and of their other sins, there awoke in them a truly religious spirit, a spirit of obedience and earnest devotion, resulting, for one thing, in a final abandonment of idolatry

Doubtless, too, the exiles in the latter part of their captivity, while subject to the Persians, were considerably influenced by the religious ideas of that people; how considerably is an inquiry which would take us here too far afield. But certain it is that from this time on the conceptions of Zarathustra crop out continually in Jewish writings. Already, during the exile, the Second Isaiah calls the Persian Cyrus the shepherd of Yahwè (44: 28), "his anointed," i. e., Messiah (45: 1).

Ezekiel expected that the captives would shortly be permitted to return to their native land, and in the last nine chapters of his book he constructs for them what may be called a new Constitution. In this he exhibits a remarkable ability, devising a scheme by which Church and State should be virtually separate, yet having related functions making each the helpmate of the other. As priest, versed in his profession, he prescribes the ritual to be observed, which, by its

marked development beyond the Deuteronomic regulations first brought into use only fifty years before, shows a rapid growth of sacerdotalism. Previous to the appearance of Deuteronomy in 621 B.C., Levites and priests were one class, and in that book no distinction was made; but as it required the discontinuance of offerings at the "high-places" about the country, and recognized only the one altar at Jerusalem, it practically threw the country priests out of business. They could only come into the city and accept such subordinate positions about the temple as were offered them, or abandon their calling. The country priest, as we can readily understand, was a less cultivated person than his city brothers who, from long enjoying the perquisites of the temple, had become a class by themselves, refining on their Levite distinction by calling themselves the "sons of Zadok" or "the sons of Aaron." Thus the Deuteronomic legislation introduced a difficulty it did not provide for: it left too many priests for the one altar to which it restricted service. This difficulty Ezekiel undertakes to meet by lessening the number of priests, making a clear distinction between priests and Levites; which he does by limiting the priesthood to the sons of Zadok, that is to the old circle who, time out of mind, have had charge of the temple duties, leaving the Levites

or country ministers only the subordinate offices of singers and servants. He also plans a new temple, prophesies a reunion of the twelve tribes, and appor-tions the territory of Palestine to them by drawing parallels of latitude across the country,— ideas which were never to be carried out. In the nature of the case, much of his planning served no further purpose than to occupy the minds of the people in the waiting years of their captivity As belonged to a priest, he showed a better judgment in Church than in State affairs. A feature of his prophecy is that it takes the form of visions, strange and monstrous. The prophets all had their idiosyncrasies, but Ezekiel is the only one who really had “wheels in his head.” A recurring vision is that of the four-faced, wheeled cherubs, suggesting cyclists.

Insertions in this book have evidently been made here and there to correct the prophet or to tone him down. He even made corrections himself, writing a new prophecy to replace one that had failed of fulfillment, while indifferently letting the old representation stand.\* Though the text is often corrupt, showing that it has been tampered with, still we probably have more of the genuine words of this than of either of

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\* Thus 29.17-21 rectifies 26.12; Tyre not being spoiled by Nebuchadrezzar.

the other great prophets. So too we seem to have more of the real Jeremiah than of the real Isaiah. In volume of matter that endures, each successor shows an increase, while each is less and less a genius. Civilization grows, religion grows; but greatness in individual men cannot be counted on to advance with the advancing world. These three masters — each in the measure of his genius rather than in the bulk of his literary remains — did that which at once constituted the chief glory of their age and most effectually lifted the mind and the morals of their people distinctly above what the world had elsewhere to show; and they thus laid the foundation of that spiritual hegemony of Israel on which Christianity itself is built. The point is not as to the actual attainment of these men, their knowledge or their accomplishments, as compared with modern leaders; it is the immense advance made by them on their predecessors, the steps in the right direction taken, the vigorous push onward toward the goal. They had their faces turned to the light, and though they saw not all the truth that has ever been discovered, they saw the needed truth of the hour, and saw it so vividly that their word for the most part calls for no amendment.

## CHAPTER IV.

### The Development of Law.

Old theory of the origin of the Law-books — Alleged Mosaic authorship — The germ, far older, in Hammurabi's code — Early stages of legal evolution in Israel — More religious than civil — Original liberty to worship in any place — Occasion for restricting this — The finding of Deuteronomy — Its sweeping prohibition of all altars but one — Josiah enforces the new Law — In exile Ezekiel devises further statutes — Cyrus takes Babylon and liberates the captive Jews — A few return to Judea — Zechariah's prophetic encouragement — The temple in a manner rebuilt — Slackness of religious observance on the part of those who had remained in the home-land — Ezra arrives from Babylonia "with the Law of God in his hand" — Its promulgation — Largely a new disclosure — Most extended development of Law in Israel — Summary of the Law-giving

THE Jews' theory of the origin of their written law — theory accepted without question by Christians until recent times — is that it was given by Yahwè outright to Moses on the passage from Egypt to the Promised Land. This revelation, in the tradition, was accompanied by such signs and wonders as to clothe it with an authority out of comparison superior to that of the prophets, to whom also Yahwè is said to have spoken. It consists of the Genesis history and the four Law-books (the Pen-

tateuch), all of which, according to the theory, Moses wrote out at the dictation of Yahwè and left as a heritage to his people. This theory, which stood practically unquestioned for ages, has been thoroughly undermined by modern criticism, and few now of any pretension to scholarship or even decent general information are so poor as to do it reverence. To begin with, it flies in the face of the well-established doctrine of evolution that all high things are of lowly origin, coming to excellence through gradual and long-continued stages of development, and goes on the assumption, once the groundwork of creed and catechism, that perfection was in the past, the golden age at the beginning; that the wisest man, the meekest man, the strongest man, the longest-lived man, lived ages ago; that the men with whom God could deign to speak are all long since dead. The science of our time has deprived such fancies of any respectable standing; and now the supposition that Moses could have written the Pentateuch, or that the complex and elaborate legal regulations therein contained could have been of any use to the Hebrews of his time, is *prima facie* so improbable that evidence sufficiently convincing ever again to revive it is impossible. Moreover, the oldest authentic testimony we have, that of the prophets of the eighth century, as far as

it goes, negatives any such supposition Hosca in a single verse, and that of doubtful genuineness, refers to written laws current in his day, but not in a way to identify them with any such work as the Pentateuch (Hos 8:12). Assuredly, if that work had been in existence he would have made the fact plain, as, later on, Jeremiah made it plain that he knew of some part of it (Jer. 7:22 ff.) Besides, as we shall see, it is now quite possible to fix, within reasonable limits, the date of the several Law-books.

The claim that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, or anything like them, being effectually disposed of, the question remains, Did he leave any written rules for the government of his people? While there is no decisive data from which to determine this matter, there are certain facts which yield an appearance of probability Discoveries of the last half-century show that the age of Moses was not an altogether benighted one; that from certain centers considerable enlightenment radiated, that writing was an art widely known and practised Even tribes of the desert must in some measure have felt the influence of this civilization.\* Moses, if there really was such a man, may well have spent his early life in

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\* See page 32

Egypt and been versed in such wisdom as the Egyptians had. Then there is the persistent tradition of him, which to be sure cannot be definitely traced beyond the eighth century, as the lawgiver of Israel. Under these circumstances it is not a violent supposition that he wrote out for the guidance of the people some simple regulations concerning such matters as the primitive writing of a tribe is apt to deal with — religious ceremonies, laws of taboo, magic arts, etc ; together with some current legends of far-off ancestors. He may, too, have left a Decalogue of some sort, having some little ethical quality, the germ of that which now remains. If the great chieftain did this much, it would have proved sufficient basis for the tradition that he wrote the Pentateuch ; just as David's having had some little gift for song and for the harp sufficed, along with his kingly distinction, to get him the credit of writing the book of Psalms.

Whatever writing it was that Moses left, it was not likely to be much read by people of the grade of the Hebrews of the second millennium b. c. Of no great length, it would be familiarized orally, as is the custom of primitive peoples. Few copies would be made, we may be sure. Tradition has it that the original was placed in the ark ; if so, it passed out of existence with that rude reliquary.

As time went on and the Hebrews established themselves in Canaan, they must have come gradually more under Babylonian literary influence. The diffusion of literature in those days, while not on a scale made possible by the printing-press, was real, and surely reached to the most secluded people in western Asia. Babylon had been making books for a thousand years, and as she then dominated to the Mediterranean, she must necessarily have had much to do in shaping the intellectual life of the Hebrews. From this source they inevitably drew, as soon as the brightest among them took to writing, much that was naturally added to the words of Moses. As before stated, \* they adapted the Babylonian stories of the creation and the flood; it is perfectly evident also that they drew from Hammurabi's code, which had long been a sort of common law for all the region round about. In this way, presumably, the growth of written law went on in Israel, very slowly indeed, without any marked stage that can now be traced, during some four hundred years. At the end of that time, at any rate, the Israelites were formulating some definite written regulations, and these, backed up by myths and legends, were afterwards incorporated in the History

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\* See page 34.

and Law books which have come down to us, where they may severally be traced. These earliest discernible writers, with their later redactors, the critics designate by alphabetical symbols, and speak of "D" and "E" and "J" and "P," and the rest, as though these were the actual names of fairly well-known individuals. Into this field, however, it is not expedient here to enter \*

It would be interesting to know whether the increments to the germinal Law of Moses made in the early time were made in his name. Presumably they were. Such was surely the case with the expansions made in the ninth and eighth centuries. Hence the steady and enormous growth of the Mosaic legend. But the code thus produced was fragmentary and to a degree inoperative, as would appear from the exceedingly slight and dubious reference to it in the oldest prophets. Down to the beginning of the career of Jeremiah there was no authoritative Law-book such as in after centuries constituted the chief boast of Israel. Established custom, in mode of worship as in other matters, was law, and such guide-books as existed, while doubtless supporting themselves on

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\* All this matter, too abstruse for presentation here, will be found set forth in Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopædias under the head of one and another of the History and Law books.

Moses, simply reflected existing custom. Some of these earlier customs we can trace. The oldest stratum of Exodus and Numbers fully recognizes, as do the oldest prophets, the right to worship in any place. Wherever the worshiper found himself, he might build an altar and make an offering. Shrines were established all over the country, on every hill-top, and there was no more question of their regularity than of the regularity of the temple in Jerusalem. As these outlying places of worship were not easily supervised by a central authority, and proved a serious obstacle to the efforts of the better priests and prophets for an exclusive worship of Yahwè,—the village priests being frequently open to the seductions of foreign gods,—a sentiment began shaping itself early in the seventh century in favor of the centralization of worship as a means of exterminating idolatry. In the year 638 there came to the throne of Judah a boy of eight years, named Josiah, who from the first was wholly under the influence of the party of this reform. In the eighteenth year of his reign an extraordinary thing happened to break the monotony of Jewish literary history.

The incident with which this event connects itself is of the most commonplace. The temple at Jerusalem required some repairs. Preliminary to this work,

Josiah sent his secretary, Shaphan, to Hilkiah, the priest in charge, with direction to make up the amount of money received by the doorkeepers from the voluntary contributions of the people, and to hand it over to the men to be entrusted with the reparation. When the secretary had delivered his message, Hilkiah made to him the announcement that, in overhauling the contents of the part of the temple needing repairs, a book had been found—the Book of the Law! So saying, he handed him the book. Shaphan immediately read it, and then took it to the king and read it to him. It was in form a new book, the first great compend of the religious duties laid on Israel, ostensibly a communication from Yahwè himself to Moses, giving an explicit statement of his requirements of his people, and setting forth the consequences of obedience and of disobedience. Naturally it made a profound impression. King and court were thrown into a state of great excitement, for the book contained threats against the people if ever they should be guilty of such practices as were then common in Judah. Especially did it denounce multiplicity of altars; Yahwè could be worshiped aright only in his central sanctuary. Naturally the first question to be settled was as to the genuineness of the book. Five men of rank, among whom were Shaphan and Hilkiah, were

commissioned to seek out an oracle on this point, and to ascertain whether the frightful penalties appointed in the book might now be expected to fall on the kingdom. Jeremiah is the person we should expect them to consult, he being the leading prophet, just rising to renown. But for some reason they did not go to him, but sought out instead a prophetess named Huldah. Whatever declaration they may have got from her in regard to punishment for violations of a law they had never before heard of, the point was established to their satisfaction that the new-found book was what it purported to be, the Word of Yahwè to Moses.

This book, there is abundant reason to believe, was Deuteronomy, in its original form, somewhat less extended than as we know it \* The greater part of the book was certainly not new at the time of its appearance, it summed up, rather, precepts that had been current and regulations that had been observed time out of mind, the writer using probably many an old leaflet in making his compilation. Some of his rules are traceable to the code of Hammurabi, then seventeen hundred years old. His moral teaching accords with that of the great prophets of the eighth

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\* Subsequent additions are chaps 1-4, 27, 29-34

and seventh centuries. There is in him even a spirit of kindness, of humanity, not always to be found in them. Like them he contends stoutly for the sole and exclusive worship of Yahwè, and is priest enough to insist strenuously, as they do not, on the prescribed ritual observances. His principal departure, however, from previous teaching is his strict limitation of sacrificial offerings to the temple at Jerusalem (chaps. 12–26). This was a sweeping innovation, leading to nothing less than a religious revolution. Assuming to write from a period some six hundred and fifty years anterior, he was able to use his knowledge of intervening history to enforce his injunctions. His threats of public calamities for transgression, put into the mouth of Yahwè addressing Moses, are quite obviously drawn from the actual experience of the nation in centuries subsequent to Moses. He counseled for exigencies which belonged not at all to the age of the exodus, nor to an immediately subsequent time, but to the age of Josiah. In specifying the sort of man a king ought not to be, he evidently had Solomon in mind (17: 14–17); and Josiah could not fail to see himself portrayed in the following delineation of the good king: “And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom that he shall write him a copy of this Law in a book, out of that which is before the

priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear Yahwè, his God, to keep all the words of this Law, and these statutes, to do them" (17: 18, 19).

Josiah put the new features of the Law in force, abolishing all shrines save only that in Jerusalem, at the same time increasing the pomp of the ceremonies there. The movement had its favorable and its unfavorable effects. It proved the most effectual blow yet delivered to idolatry, while by the added importance which it gave the Jerusalem priesthood it led to the development of the hierarchy and to the extinction of prophecy. Jeremiah looked on coldly, balancing the evil against the good, not withholding his criticism, questioning the claims of the new book (Jer. 7: 21-23); and when the foolhardy Josiah fell at the battle of Megiddo he made no lament for him.

It is not necessary to suppose that the priest Hilkiah had anything to do with the writing of the book found in the temple, or that he had any knowledge of how it came there. In all probability it was the work of some one sometime connected with the place, who wrote it secretly, never finishing it, and, while awaiting the opportune moment for its publication, died, leaving it hid away. The only deception

practised in the matter lies in the assumption of the writing to be the work of Moses,—a kind of proceeding which, while not justifiable by our standards, was resorted to without scruple by Jewish authors, fully one-third of the Bible being pseudonymous. The publication of this first great Law-book took place in the year 621 b. c.

Not only was the immediate influence of this publication on Jewish polity immense, revolutionary; it gave an impulse to religious evolution which—helped rather than hindered by the captivity—led in the next sixty years to the creation of another Law-book, this time without any reference to Moses, but as the word of Yahwè to Ezekiel in Babylonia. It is brief, forming only the last nine chapters of his prophecy, is not intended to supersede, but only to supplement Deuteronomy, which, aiming specially at the centralization of the worship of Yahwè through the suppression of local shrines, gives slight direction for the conduct of that worship. Ezekiel looked forward to the restoration of the temple at Jerusalem according to an architectural plan of his own, revealed to him in a vision, and on the same authority announced the acceptable order of sacrifices to be offered there. This was another advance in the direction of sacerdotalism. But the final movement in that direction was

taken by others. The Jewish State had fallen, and with it civil law as represented in the person of the king. The spirit of the people recouped itself by large development on the religious side, particularly with reference to the formalities of worship. While a band of poets sang by the rivers of Babylon the last great strains of declining prophecy, minds of another type were busy elaborating the ritual for the temple on the lines indicated by Ezekiel, though not in his frank fashion as a revelation to themselves. They did it on the plan of the making of Deuteronomy ; that is, carried it back and credited it to Moses. Of the progress of this work, and of the hands concerned in it, of course there would be no record.

In the meantime the Babylonian empire had fallen into the hands of Cyrus, the Persian (537 b c). His Zarathustran training had taught him to respect all religions ; he left the Babylonians to their worship of Merodach, and authorized the Jews to rebuild their temple to "the God of heaven" at Jerusalem. A Jew was appointed governor of the province of Judea, who, perhaps, took with him thither some of the leading persons among his fellow-captives, including possibly Haggai and Zechariah. At all events we find these two prophets active about 520, stirring the people up to the work of building a new temple.

Haggai, then an old man, may have remembered the former temple, destroyed sixty-six years before ; his prophecy, which is of the shortest, seems to have been uttered as his last word. It is pronounced as advice of Yahwè to Zerubbabel, the governor, urging him to build the temple, and promising all sorts of glorious things when once the building is up and the service resumed. The writer contents himself with brief and simple speech, saying directly what he means. Zechariah, who appears at the same time, is a much more ambitious author, giving his prophecy in the shape of visions of the night, filled with all manner of strange symbols which are explained to him by an angel. They mostly represent the honors to be conferred on the builders of the second temple, and the glory which the finished work will bring to Jerusalem. Only the first eight chapters are his, and toward the end he lays aside visions and speaks without the intervention of an angel, rising at the close to a noble poem. It is here that the priest discloses the true prophet with an ethical conception of religious duty :

“ Thus saith Yahwè of hosts .

These are the things that ye shall do .

Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor ,

Judge according to truth , and for peace in your gates ,

And meditate not evil against one another in your hearts ,

And love not a false oath !

For all these are things which I hate , saith Yahwè ”

Zechariah also glimpsed the coming of all nations to the worship of the God of Israel, and his last word is the highest that had as yet been spoken looking in that direction :

" Thus saith Yahwè of hosts  
It shall come to pass that many nations shall come,  
And the inhabitants of many cities,  
And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying,  
' Let us go speedily to pray before Yahwè,  
And to seek Yahwè of hosts !  
I will go also '  
Then shall come many nations and mighty kingdoms  
To seek Yahwè of hosts in Jerusalem,  
And to pray before Yahwè  
In those days shall ten men of all languages of the nations take hold,  
They shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew,  
Saying, ' We will go with you,  
For we have heard that God is with you ' "

Through the efforts of these men the temple was rebuilt, being finished and dedicated in 515 ; but things did not turn out at all according to their expectations. The native Jews, that is, those whose ancestors had not been taken to Babylonia, were a motley set from having had for seventy years little civic order among them, and from the interruption of the national worship by the destruction of the temple. They had mixed with the Samaritans, who appear to have turned in to help in the building of the temple, and had intermarried to some extent with yet more alien tribes round about. Under these circum-

stances the use of the temple when it was built — poor specter that it was of the original structure — was little to the mind of the strict Jew.

It is not now supposed that Cyrus gave full permission to the captives to return, for few seem to have done so for the next fifty years. Such as came were not likely to be pleased with the situation. The habits contracted under the slack regulations that had obtained in Judea, the slovenliness of the temple service, the neglect of Sabbath observance, shocked the new-comers whose priests in the land of their captivity had indeed "magnified the Law and made it honorable," announcing explicit revelations from Yahwè concerning the fitting mode of his worship Nehemiah, a Jew who, from being in favor at the court of King Artaxerxes, obtained some concessions, came with quite a caravan in 445, and succeeded in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. But the opposition he met with, and the general unreadiness of the Jews in Judea to accept the reform programme of the Babylonian Jews, led him shortly to return to Babylon to decide there with the leaders of his people on some more concerted measures to carry out the scheme he had at heart of effecting a thoroughgoing reformation at Jerusalem. Delays were met with, not unlikely arising from incompletion of the literary preparations.

At any rate it was not till the year 433 that he arrived again in Jerusalem, followed soon after by Ezra,\* a priest who is called "a ready scribe of the Law of Moses," and who is represented as setting out on this expedition "with the Law of God in his hand," as though he had on the instant added to it the last pen-stroke. Nehemiah, as governor, appears to come this time clothed with a more complete authority; we hear of no more opposition. And Ezra, as priest, achieves an entire ascendancy. It begins to be noised about that he has some revelations of the Law made to Moses which have never before been brought to light. The first day of the seventh month is at hand, and among the newly discovered commands touching the seventh month are these: "The first day of the seventh month shall be a solemn rest unto you, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation" "The first day (of the seventh month) shall be a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Yahwè; on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation" (Lev. 23: 23 f.). According to these commands, new to the ears of the people, a great assembly con-

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\* Kuenen and many others give an earlier date for the arrival of Ezra, on the strength of Ez 7:7 f. The date there stated is considered erroneous by more recent authorities

vened on the plateau in front of the Water Gate, where all preparations were made by Ezra for a memorable occasion. He produced what he called "the Book of the Law of Moses," and proceeded to read it to the people. Evidently it was something which, in large part at least, they had never heard before, and were not expected to understand, for instructed Levites were posted among them to explain as the reading went on. Nobody seems to have questioned the assumption of the reader that the Law as he read it came down from God to Moses, and, as it contained multitudinous requirements which the listeners had never kept, — never heard of, in fact, — they were filled with consternation and terror. All around in the vast auditory people were in tears and making outcries of fear and sorrow. The spectacle touched the leaders to the heart, and they felt constrained to quiet the excitement they had raised. The reading was suspended till the next day, after having gone on, we are told, from dawn until midday. Observe, the document was so considerable that it could not be read through in that time; but there was no need of haste, as the assemblies were to continue eight consecutive days. So, for the first day at least, the afternoon was given up to festivity lest the people should become frantic with excitement. Every day

the reading continued in the same manner as on the first. At the conclusion on the eighth day the whole matter was summed up as to its bearing on the New Israel, and on the twenty-fourth day, with confession and prayer, priests and people made a solemn pledge to keep the Law which they had heard.

To get a clear glimpse of this epoch-marking scene one should study the original account of it in the eighth chapter of the book of Nehemiah. If there is some resemblance to the story of what occurred on the first publication of Deuteronomy one hundred and eighty-nine years before, it is to be remembered that the exciting cause is strikingly similar. At all events Nehemiah's record has a straightforward, trustworthy appearance; realistic features come out at every turn. Ezra's wooden pulpit, made expressly for the occasion; the names of the thirteen priests supporting him in the proclamation, so many on his right hand, so many on his left; the names of the priests who, with the Levites, went through the crowd and explained the Law as Ezra read,—though in themselves uninteresting facts, in the connection are highly significant. They make a picture of the reign of the priesthood. Ezra is a pontiff whose authority is not to be gainsaid. What he gives out as the Law of Moses, however novel it may sound, must be the

genuine article. The people, men and women, "all wept," we are told, "when they heard the words of the Law." They were astonished beyond measure to find such a number of explicit Mosaic requirements in existence of which until now they had remained in entire ignorance. Mention is directly made of one of these, and the book of Nehemiah naively says in regard to it: "They found written in the Law which Yahwè had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month"; and he goes on to tell how then and there this regulation was carried out *for the first time*. The words are: "Since the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day had not the children of Israel done so."

The Ezra-Nehemiah narrative—these two little books were originally one—leaves no room for doubt that at the time referred to, 432 B. C., announcement was made of a very large accession to the Mosaic literature. The time taken in the reading of it, with the necessary explanation, the greater part of eight days (and we must remember that these old-time Jews, unlike our modern church-goers, were up and at their holy tasks with the sun), indicates the mass of the material. When Deuteronomy was produced and handed to the courtier Shaphan, he sat down and read

it in half an hour or so, as, in its original form, it did not exceed in length an ordinary sermon ; then went with it to the king and read it over to him. Making all allowance for delays of explanation, the time consumed in Ezra's reading implies that he might have had before him the whole Hexateuch, as the first six books of the Bible are called. This would mean that all these books, with the single exception of Deuteronomy, were compiled, in substantially their present form, in the period of the exile. Compiled, it needs to say, for undoubtedly a very considerable part of the material, the historical and legendary, and much of the ethical portions, existed in scattered leaflets which had circulated, some of them, for many centuries. But there was more than compilation ; a good part of the matter was wholly new. The substantial additions originating in this period are the ceremonial regulations which make up a part of Exodus and Numbers and nearly all of Leviticus. The shaping of the whole into our present Pentateuch was probably the work of the years immediately subsequent to the scene above described.

How much of a hand Ezra had in writing what he read to the people it is impossible to say. In the nature of the case, the real origin of work which was to be thrown back upon the age of Moses had to be

kept secret ; finding out the authorship would ruin the scheme. While, in an uncritical age like that under consideration, the circumstances as related excited no suspicion that a deception was being practised, the very narrative itself affords to the modern reader evidence enough that such was the case. Thus the conclusion is established on the testimony of unwilling witnesses. The narrators who were on the ground, and the redactors through whose hands the narratives have passed, had an interest in not revealing the bottom facts. Still, what they have said makes these facts simply inevitable. The conclusion is, therefore, doubly sure.

But this deception is not to be morally judged by present standards. Every claim of a prophet to speak by supernatural direction lacks something, as we should say, of absolute sincerity. The Delphic and other oracles were veiled impostures. But we can understand how these arts in the hands of the really high-minded were made to serve noble ends, how with them the good in view so outweighed all other considerations as to render them not over-nice in the choice of means. To the priests of the exile, the establishment of a cultus on unshakable authority seemed the one thing essential for the rehabilitation of the Jewish State, the one aim for which good men ought to strive.

A cultus they could produce, but it could be made to stand only by founding it on the authority of Moses. So they deemed themselves justified in representing the completed Law as a deliverance to that leader.

The great output of the exile substantially completes the development of law in Israel. By this last most voluminous addition, the ceremonial side of religion received an elaboration which would have seemed to Isaiah or Jeremiah a sad departure from the simplicity of worship dear to their hearts, though in fact it is only such a growth of ritual as, evolving on different lines, repeated itself early in Christianity and is seen in the history of other religions. Law necessarily concerns itself with form, and, applied to religion, tends to externalism. A higher step is the development of the sentiment of worship through ever kindling and reviving spontaneous expression. In this work Israel did, as we shall later see, a far diviner service.

What is here set forth is only to mark the fact that law in Israel came in no strange, miraculous fashion, but by orderly steps of evolution, from custom as it stood in the primitive tribe, through some few spoken or possibly written words of Moses; through the accretions of after centuries to those words, shaping themselves into ever more important booklets from

time to time, of which there remain in the present Bible the dim reminiscence of a name, as the "Book of the Covenant," of a recurring word, as "Holiness," of a particular divine appellation, as "Elohim" or "Yahwè"; through the monumental Law-book of the seventh century, which gathered into itself all the best regulations that before had been pronounced, correcting or expanding them to suit the needs of its time; through Ezekiel's Constitution for the Church and State of which he dreamed; on to the final, most imposing construction, wrought by unknown hands in the exile, completed and administered by Ezra. If this vast accumulation of prescribed rites and ceremonies is, in itself, to the modern reader, an unmitigated weariness, it is of interest to the student as a growth once quick with life in every part, illustrative of the ways of the spirit building up for itself formal expressions

## CHAPTER V.

### Literary Production under the Hierarchy.

Triumph of Ezra's scheme—Consequent growth of exclusiveness, intolerance, and spiritual pride—Two literary protests appear in Ruth and Jonah—Explication of the frequent non-fulfillment of prophecy—Alexander in Asia—Vassalage to Greece begins, bringing the Jewish mind under a potent Greek influence—The book of Baruch—Chronicles, divergence from Kings—Complete and most elaborate development of the temple service—Psalm-writing—Ritual enriched by adoption of foreign ceremonies—The Purim feast—Book of Esther—The rise of public instruction—Synagogues take the place of the old shrines abolished by Josiah—The country priest becomes a school-master.

WE are now at a period in the history of Israel when the astonishing power of literary productiveness, which began to show itself in the eighth century and culminated during the captivity, has subsided. That period closed in an effort to gather up and preserve the considerable mass of writings constituting the national literature. It remains for us to trace the narrowed stream of this literature a few centuries further on, observing, as we pass, the elevation of most of these writings, down to a certain time, into sacred scriptures.

Ezra's triumph, as we have seen, was complete. A religious and tribal exclusiveness, more intense than had ever been known before, established itself at Jerusalem. While the mighty empires of the East ignored the crushed and powerless province of Judea, too insignificant in its overthrow to attract further attention, the Jew, under the leadership of the priesthood, set up for himself a spiritual power, on the basis of which he assumed more than his ancient sense of superiority to other men. The notion of a chosen, a holy people, was intensified, and a spirit of intolerance awoke strangely incongruous with the shattered and humiliated condition of the State. This was, however, but the natural outcome of the idea, now fully developed, that Yahwè was the only God. In the earlier days when the existence of other gods for other nations was freely acknowledged, there was the admission also that those gods and their worshipers had certain rights, and their altars were even erected side by side with those of Yahwè,—the Jewish people showing then something of the liberality which afterward marked the religious life of Greece and Rome. But the instant a strict monotheism was set up, the instant it began to be affirmed that Yahwè was the only God, respect for other faiths was necessarily restricted. And as this assertion strengthened and

at length became the general belief, a profound contempt for the outside world of idolaters grew up. Only in Israel was Yahwè worshiped, all the rest of mankind, therefore, were living in neglect of the one true God, who would assuredly bring them to naught. It was the part of His servants to separate themselves entirely from these idolaters on whom divine vengeance must soon or late fall. Ezra put this doctrine in practice on his first arrival in Jerusalem by insisting in the name of his God that every Jew who had taken a foreign wife should at once part company with her and her children. Many of the Jews who had been left behind in Judea at the time of the deportation of the more important families to Babylonia had formed this forbidden connection. We may well believe that Ezra's high-handed proceeding was not carried out without protest. Four men are mentioned by name as having demurred to the edict of separation.\* But what is of more interest, we are able to say with confidence that, in the next century, disapproval of Ezra's course took literary form in two brief, yet, for the time, remarkable books that have come down to us. One of these, the book of Ruth, stands in the Bible.

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\* Jonathan the son of Asahel, and Jehaziah the son of Tikvah, opposed this matter, and Meshullam and Shabbathai the Levite supported them — Ez 10 15

next in order after Judges, and, in the margin of the authorized version, bears date as of the next century after the migration to Canaan, simply because the scene is laid back there. But scholars long since pointed out the impossibility of this date, on philological grounds alone, as the little work abounds in words that were not coined till long after that time. There is no evidence of the existence of Ruth until after Ezra's time, and the argument of the book fits to no period so well as that immediately following his reformation, to which it may be read as a natural protest. The pleasant pastoral is well known, how Boaz, a man of high repute in Israel, took a Moabitish damsel to be his wife, and how Yahwè looked on the union with approval and made the foreign wife to be, in the fourth generation, the mother of David. It is impossible to tell whether this incident rests upon actual tradition concerning the ancestry of David, or was invented by the writer to suit his purpose.\* However it may be, that purpose is unmistakable. The writer means to show that it is a perfectly creditable thing to take a wife from outside the nation of Israel, if the chance of getting a good one is thereby

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\* Kuenen thought it a veritable tradition, and that it is supported by the statement that David, when pursued by Saul, took refuge in Moab, i. e., among his kindred.

improved ; and his art lies in embodying this idea in a story of early pastoral life, of remarkable sweetness, and in linking his characters in the line of David, which was enough to endear them forever to the Jews.

The other book presumably called out in protest against Ezra's exclusiveness must have appeared about the same time. It is the little story of Jonah — little or *big*, as one prefers to speak. Unfortunately, the name Jonah always suggests a whale, and this bit of writing is generally passed by with a smile, belittled by the grotesqueness of one of its incidents. This, read as matter of fact, is of course too much for gravity ; but the book does not pretend to be a narrative of facts ; it is really a dash of fiction, written, like Ruth, for a purpose. The little story is formed on the broad conception that God cares for other peoples as well as for Jews, and a Jewish prophet is taken through a series of mishaps because of his stubbornly refusing to recognize so obvious a truth. The art of the writer, considering the habits and prejudices of the people for whom he wrote, we must admire. In the first place, he lays the scene of the story several hundred years back, so as to give to it the force and authority of antiquity. Jonah is directed by Yahwè to go away to Nineveh and proclaim the impending destruction of

that wicked city ; upon which he exhibits the Jewish reluctance to have anything to do with the heathen, and seeks by flight to evade the performance of his duty. But Yahwè follows him up, and leads him through such strange ways that he finally deems it best to pocket his exclusive holiness, go to Nineveh, and preach to the polluted idolaters This he does, and with an effect quite beyond his expectations, for the people are smitten with penitence for their sins, and offer to do whatever the prophet of Yahwè may require. But he, true to his national hatred of foreigners, persists in declaring that they are to be utterly destroyed. Here Yahwè interferes again, and overrules this hard spirit, showing Himself as ready to pardon repentant Nineveh as repentant Jerusalem, and, to the disgust of Jonah, refuses to fulfill the threat of destruction. A clearer rebuke of Jewish narrowness, as revived and intensified after the captivity, could hardly have been set forth.

It is to be observed also that this leaflet of Jonah was designed to meet one other question : How is it that the word of Yahwè by his prophets so often fails of fulfillment ? Even the greatest of them had made threats and promises that were never carried out, and this had become very embarrassing to the reflecting observer, as under the Deuteronomic law such failure

involved the condemnation of the prophet. The plain declaration is : "When a prophet speaketh in the name of Yahwè, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which Yahwè hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously" But under such a sweeping rule every prophet must occasionally be found wanting ; the most illustrious had not been clear-sighted enough to avoid erroneous predictions. The author of this little story endeavors to get over the difficulty by supposing that new conditions necessitate the modification of consequences to be imposed. Nineveh's confessing and forsaking her sins puts a new face on the proposition "Thou, O Yahwè, art a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil (which thou hast threatened to inflict)" Thus the prophetic reputation and Yahwè's reputation could be, the writer thought, in a manner, both saved at once.

While at this distance we can warmly appreciate the sentiment of these two books, let us not fall into the error of siding against Ezra and Nehemiah in their movement. That there was something to be urged against it, the writers of Ruth and Jonah show ; and yet it was probably the only course to save the Jewish State from total disintegration. In political and ecclesiastical matters it is not the good of the whole

world that is uppermost, but the good of a nation or of a sect; and in this narrower view Ezra's work needed to be done. It was an essential step in a course of development, a practical application of ideas which the whole period of captivity had conspired to bring to the front. It was a reformation, in that it did effect a change, on the whole for the better, in the religious condition of the Jews. So we call the work of Hezekiah against idolatry, little efficient as it was, a reformation ; and Josiah's violent revolutionary movement is freely so called. But we must have a care not to understand too much by this word in these connections. The changes brought about through Ezra and Nehemiah were in some respects a gain, in others they were a loss. These reformers were more careful of the letter than of the spirit, exalted the written word at the expense of the free word, giving the future to the scribe, taking it away from the prophet. From their day Yahwè-worship has a rigorous form ; the temple service, by its exceeding complexity, absorbs all attention ; God hardly speaks any more by irregular, intermittent voices crying in the wilderness ; He speaks by the book. But the change must not be taken as wholly the work of these two rather unimportant men ; it was a gradual process going on for hundreds of years ; theirs was only the finishing touch.

While Judaism was shaping itself in the little province of Judea, the great world was again changing hands. Alexander, having the mastery of Greece, found himself able to march victoriously to the end of the earth. The Persian empire went down before him, and Asia for the first time fell under European dominion. It is on record that Alexander, while besieging Tyre, demanded the submission of the Jews, which they refused, alleging that they were pledged to Persia by the oath of the people sworn to Darius. As this was probably the sole instance that Alexander met with in Asia of a tributary province recognizing the binding obligation of an oath of fealty to a ruling power, and as the Jews, seeing how things were going, soon after sent him their submission, he forgave their first refusal, and ever after treated them with consideration, welcoming many of them to his city of Alexandria, where in time they came to have a great influence. In the year 323 B C Alexander died, and his kingdom, as the book of Daniel, written one hundred and fifty-eight years after, has it, "was broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven." One of his generals, Ptolemy, acquired control of Palestine, and for a hundred years it formed part of the Egyptian kingdom.

Sometime in this period appears to have been written the book of Baruch — an attempt to resume the prophetic style. The writer could not prophesy in his own name, nor as of his own age ; he must date back into the time when there were prophets. So he assumes to write in the name of Jeremiah's assistant and from the days of the exile. Aside from this pretense of being somebody he was not, he does credit to the name he has taken, and, considering that the work is older than some books that have been admitted, we are surprised that Baruch is excluded from the Old Testament canon. At the end of the little book is attached a so-called Epistle of Jeremiah, which is perhaps two hundred years younger.

About the beginning of the third century B. C., we must place the books of Chronicles. The writer, who also edited with modifications some of the older books, undertakes here a new version of Israel's career from the days of Saul down to the exile, going over nearly the same ground as the books of Samuel and Kings, prefacing the whole with nine wearisome chapters of genealogies of priests and kings, carried back to Adam, the parts linked together by threads of history or tradition. The work of the Chronicler reflects with unintentional fidelity the spirit of the

time in which it was written, and as an indirect record of religious ideas and customs then current (about 300 B. C.) it has a certain value, while adding nothing to our knowledge of the earlier time. At the date of this writing Jewish conceptions had undergone such a change under the priestly influence that it became desirable to have the history of the early kings cast in a new light and so as to throw the priesthood and the temple into more prominence. This recasting involved many contradictions of the older books, which give the commentators no end of trouble. But the contradictions of previous authorities are explained by the evident purpose of the writer in diverging from them. He is a functionary of the temple, thoroughly imbued with the priestly spirit, and his ruling ambition in writing history is to magnify the importance of the priestly office. So he represents the priesthood in the time of Solomon as having the same functions it had after Ezra. The temple and the temple service are the things that most nearly concern him. Himself a Levite, he dwells with especial fondness on what glorifies his own order. Because the Northern kingdom forsook the Jerusalem temple and appointed priests who were not Levites, he drops it out of his record, confining himself to an account of the Southern kingdom, whereas in Kings we have an impartial

report of both. He represents, contrary to the older record, that it was regarded, in the days of the kings, absolutely unlawful for any but the priests to offer sacrifices, and he states that, Uzziah venturing to do this thing himself, in opposition to the will of the priests, Yahwè interfered and smote the king with leprosy (II. Chron. 26: 16–20). The Chronicler is led into a most striking divergence from the previous record by a desire, natural to him as a priest, to make the new Levitical Law — comparatively new, not yet one hundred and fifty years old — appear of high antiquity, perfectly familiar to Solomon and David.\* David, according to this writer, received from Yahwè the plan of the temple to be constructed, with full details of the order of service to be conducted in it; whereas, in the previous account, the temple is altogether Solomon's idea. In the third century David had become completely idealized as the hero-saint and singer of Israel, and the Chronicler goes to all lengths of absurdity in following out this distortion. In short, these books are among the worst examples to be found of history made in furtherance of an idea. And yet probably we ought not to impeach the honesty of the writer. He appears to be honest, and yet he is not

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\* I. Chron 15 2; 16 37–40, 21 28–30. Cf II. Chron 8 12, 13 with I Kings 9 · 25

trustworthy. That is to say, he is so thoroughly imbued with the Law introduced by Ezra, so assured of its being an old Law coming down even from Moses, that he feels authorized to assume without evidence, and even against evidence, its observance in the glorious days of the monarchy. The writer was a very busy man with the older literature, for, besides producing this substitute for Samuel and Kings, he re-wrote the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, apparently with considerable omissions, and left upon others of the old books traces of his hand and of the time in which he lived.

Any adequate account of this epoch, from 400 to 200 B. C., would be filled to weariness with description of the solemn pomp of the temple service. Scarce anywhere or ever has ritualism had such absolute sway. Foiled in every political undertaking, and the glory of original prophecy departed, the Jew bent his energies to the development of a gorgeous and infinitely precise ceremonial. True to his old propensity for crediting every sacred thing to a remote antiquity, he shut his eyes to the fact that this was a new growth, and still went on elaborating the ritual. Singing became a great feature, and the genius of the people turned itself to the production of sacred songs. In the course of the first hundred years after Ezra the larger

number of the psalms were written.\* It was the grand epoch of religious rhapsody. Out of the mass produced, the favorite pieces were selected for use in the temple, and so were started on the way to canonicity. Just as the Wisdom books were ascribed to Solomon and the legal books to Moses, these hymns tended to take the name of David, who by force of tradition was the typical singer. But, as we now see, the occasion calling for this book of songs did not exist till Ezra had instituted the more imposing temple service. Moreover, their substance generally suits only to the circumstances of this later time.

All down through the earlier centuries there was conflict between prophets and people over the matter of worship. The people were ever falling into idolatry, for which the prophets never ceased berating them. The prophetic indignation was especially strong against religious observances of foreign extraction. Since Ezra all is changed. We hear no more of the nation lapsing into the service of false gods, no more vehe-

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\* The many points of resemblance between the best psalms and the Zarathustran Gathas (Psalm - books) — especially the Gathas Ahumavaiti and Ustavaiti — with which the Jews became acquainted toward the close of the exile, leave no room to doubt that the impulse to this form of writing derived directly from Persia. The sublime spiritual conceptions of Zarathustra (Zoroaster) were five hundred, perhaps a thousand, years old when they first came under Jewish notice.

ment assaults upon idolatry as a Jewish sin. What is the meaning of this? Is the age-long tendency to run after strange gods entirely changed? or have the new leaders come to tolerate what was so hateful to the old prophets?

The solution of this problem appears to lie in the fact that there was a sort of compromise, that in the revised ritual some things were admitted of a foreign type for which the people had shown a strong predilection. Attractive features of other forms of worship were here embodied in the authorized service of Yahwè; the orthodox worship by this means at once enriching its ceremonial and making sure of its adherents,—a proceeding identical with that of the Christian Church at a later date. It matters not, thought the priests,—more accommodating than the prophets,—that the feast of the New Moon has been, from time immemorial, a heathen celebration of the reappearance of the Moon-god; the people like it; let it become a part of the Jewish Law. The Sabbath-day—in the rituals of other peoples, “Saturn’s day” (Saturday)—naturally connected the service of Saturn with that of Yahwè. In the original conception one of these gods is hardly more stern and inhuman than the other; and if Yahwè had been elevated and spiritualized in the course of the centuries, so, at least in

some measure, had the pagan deity. Something, therefore, could be, and doubtless was, transferred from one to the other in the order of the sabbath worship finally established in the temple. And so of other observances too numerous to mention, and, besides, too foreign to our thought to have any general interest We must, however, consider one other festival of heathen derivation, as we shall thus arrive at the origin of another book of the Bible This is the Purim feast, so called nobody knows why, the word "Purim"—of Persian or Babylonian origin—defying all efforts to arrive at its significance satisfactorily. The feast was, no doubt, adopted from the Persians, and for a long time may not have been very generally observed It needed some distinctively Jewish motive in its support. So some lover of this feast wrote the book of Esther, in which by means of a wholly fanciful representation he undertakes to give a Jewish origin to Purim (Est. 9. 27 ff.) The story runs that Haman, prime minister of Ahasuerus (Xerxes I.), out of hatred for the Jews in his country contrived a plot for putting them all to death. One of them, Mordecai, gets his cousin Esther, who, as good luck would have it, is the Persian queen, wife of the great Xerxes, to intercede with the king on behalf of her people As a result of this Haman himself comes to grief, and

the Jews obtain permission to kill their enemies to their hearts' content ; a privilege they avail themselves of on a grand scale, killing 75,000 the first day and finishing up the bloody business on the morrow ; after which they have a great feast in celebration of their rescue and of the discomfiture of their enemies \* Thus the writer gives an origin to the Purim feast calculated to make it acceptable to the Jewish mind His object was fully accomplished ; Purim became one of the most popular observances. Among the Jews for centuries afterward these proverbs were current : "The temple may fail, but Purim never." "The prophets may fail, but not the Megillah" (as they called the roll on which Esther was written). The success of the book is the more remarkable as there is nothing in it of a strictly religious character, no mention of deity, no reference to the Jews in Palestine. However, the author emphasizes the idea that Jews are better than other people, and this doubtless commended his work. Its spirit is decidedly antagonistic to that of Ruth and of Jonah, and gratified a class not pleased with those writings

The Chronicler's work is typical of much that was done in this period The reign of the ritual had been

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\* The whole story is, as Noldeke in the *Encyc. Biblica* characterizes it, "a tissue of improbabilities and impossibilities."

fatal to original prophecy and weakened the motive to any original work. Men who in previous centuries would have been authors were now copyists and compilers. Attention was fixed on what *had* been written, and works of the fathers began to take on an air of sanctity. The Law at the time it was brought out by Ezra assumed an authoritative character, was accepted as divine revelation ; and around this as a nucleus other writings gradually gathered themselves. The Law always retained the first place in the people's reverence, because of its association with Moses, and because its mysterious origin seemed to place its supernatural character beyond question. It had come in ways past finding out. Other books, prophecies, histories, psalms, and the rest, had been written and preserved by more natural means, and therefore took secondary rank ; their admission to the sacred list depended on the popular preference, guided by the priests and scribes. There began to be a public opinion in these high matters. For, it is to be borne in mind, however the rise of the hierarchy quenched the prophetic spirit, which in any case could have been the gift of only a few, it served materially in bringing about a general elevation of the people. A somewhat educated class, displaced from the conduct of worship at the country altars, became instructors, widely dif-

fusing such knowledge as they had. To the hierarchy also belongs the credit of establishing the synagogue, which rose on the ruins of the sacrificial altar in every village and hamlet,—an institution patterned after which later came the Christian house of worship. To appreciate the significance of the synagogue, and the great change preparatory to it, call to mind the facts that the custom, previous to Josiah, had been to worship one god and another on the hill-tops all through the country, with various heathenish, sometimes cruel, most revolting rites ; that even where there was celebrated only the worship of Yahwè, the worship consisted wholly of sacrifices, oblations, and other propitiatory offerings. All this ritualistic business had been transferred to Jerusalem, and, instead of altars of sacrifice around the country, synagogues were built, and a means of education was thus substituted for the “high places” which in earlier centuries had been the seats of a more or less superstitious, often disreputable worship. In the synagogues the national literature was read and expounded ; whoever could instruct his neighbor spoke ; and little by little the intelligence and the morality of the scattered communities improved. In the meantime the priesthood—the educated and educating class, too numerous to be occupied with the temple functions—split first into two divis-

ions, one engaged with ritual or liturgical matters, the other with civil and moral requirements. The latter, becoming less and less of the order of priests, again divided, part devoting themselves to the study of the Law and to the expounding of the scriptures, forming the class known in the New Testament as "lawyers," and part, leaning more in the direction of philosophy, drawn to the contemplation of universal moral truth. These last were the sages, the lovers of wisdom, who wrote what are known as the Wisdom books. These, though not all admitted to the canon, form a considerable part of the Old Testament, and to them we need next to give our attention.

## CHAPTER VI.

### The Wisdom Literature.

Writings included under this head — The book of Job — Its advanced conceptions irreconcilable with a high antiquity — Incongruity of the prologue with what follows — Teaching of the poem — Its modern tone — Its divisions — Shows the hand of several writers — Probable date — Wisdom Psalms — Proverbs — Modernity of the book — Parts into which it falls — Distinctive features of the Wisdom writers — Ecclesiastes — Its pessimism, revolt from the Greek thought of immortality — Ecclesiasticus — Source from which Jesus often drew — Trend of Jewish thought toward ideas later enunciated in the Gospel — The Wisdom of Solomon — Its clear affirmation of immortality

THE Jewish Wisdom literature forms a class by itself, and consists of writings which deal with the philosophy of life, in distinction from the Law literature which provides legal regulations, mostly touching the religious ceremonial, the Prophetical literature, which aims mainly at correcting the idea of God and of His service, and the Liturgical literature, such as most of the Psalms, designed to express the religious emotions. This division includes the following, arranged in the order of their age: The book of Job; fifteen or twenty Psalms distinguished by their

didactic or proverbial tone ; Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus, and The Wisdom of Solomon. By far the most important of these writings is the book of Job.

What first fixes our attention in Job is the form, which is unique in the scriptures, the body of it being a symposium, or rather a colloquy, in which four men, three against one, make each nine speeches, the whole divided into three cycles of twelve speeches each. It is a finely finished poem with prose prologue and epilogue. But the substance is even more attractive than the form, as the problems discussed — the uses of adversity, the relation of suffering to the deserts of the sufferer, the responsibility of God for the evil in His world, the possibility of escape from unmerited pain — are living problems still, as hard to dispose of now as they were then. Then, too, there goes into the discussion, along with a truly religious earnestness, a breadth of view, an audacity of skepticism, which give to the work something of the nature of a philosophical inquiry. Where the hero of the colloquies can come to no solution of the mystery in which he is involved, he confesses his failure with all the frankness of a modern investigator. These are features that keep up the freshness of the book and make it as readable now as it was the day it was written.

Distinctly a literary work, it has received large attention from literary men, frankly rational, forceful, pungent, it draws the thoughtful who care not to be lured with visions or cheered with fancies, whose desire is to see things as they really are. The idea of God assumed differs widely from that of the Law, of the histories, or even of the prophets. He is no longer a God of Hosts battling with His enemies, dealing only with nations; He is a universal Power and Providence, apprehensible to the individual, supreme over Nature and man, revealed in least and in greatest things, in might irresistible, in essence unsearchable. Human experience is a continual disclosure of His will, and reflection on this is the groundwork of religious thought.

Time was when these advanced conceptions did not enter into the determination of the date of any book propounding them, and it was customary to give to the book of Job a very high antiquity. The Jews ascribed the writing of it to Moses, and the dates in the margin of the authorized version imply that he did it before leaving Egypt! But since the doctrine of evolution has been found to apply to the formation of scriptures as well as to the formation of worlds, of plants, and of animals,—things everywhere, spiritual as well as material, coming about by an orderly devel-

opment from the simple to the complex, from the crude to the elaborate,—any such notion is no longer tenable. And in fact there are abundant evidences in the book itself that it belongs to a late period of Jewish history, evidences overlooked when critics were blinded by an old tradition.

The next thing the observant reader marks about this book is that the prologue does not fit well with what follows. In the prologue Satan is introduced as the author of mischief, and he enters into an arrangement with Yahwè on a sort of wager to upset the piety of Job by bringing upon him a succession of troubles. Yahwè gives him a free hand and he goes to work. But in the colloquies that follow over Job's troubles Satan is not once mentioned; there is no intimation that such a power is the cause of them, or that such a power exists. This fact has led scholars to think that the prologue originally introduced a very different piece of work, now lost; that it stands prefaced to this book because popularly attractive, and is meant perhaps to be understood humorously by the more competent, since wholly ignored in the poem. As Satan was a contribution from Persia to the religious thought of the Jews, this little part may date from the exile or the years immediately subsequent.

It is not to be supposed that Job and his censorious

friends are actual persons. In a reflective poem of this kind the characters would naturally be fictitious, and the fact that a person by the name of Job is elsewhere referred to has no bearing on the question. The makers of fiction are not debarred from using names that belong to real persons.

The plain teaching of the poem, in contravention of the prophetic view, is that the good man, and so presumably the good nation, may be brought to suffer the most grievous affliction. The writer makes it look irrational to infer from a case of much suffering that there has been much sin, and irrational for a good man to look for continued prosperity on the strength of his goodness. Kuenen thought that such a novel idea in Israel could only have been prompted by a striking instance of an eminently pious man coming to grief. Such an instance is found in the overthrow and death of Josiah, after he had instituted his great reformation in Judea; and accordingly Kuenen placed the composition of Job in the time just before the exile, not without a feeling that the moment had hardly then arrived for such exalted conceptions of God as are disclosed in this book,—a feeling which in later critics has deepened into a conviction. Besides, the book is not to be thought of as the work of one man, and so, as a whole, it can hardly be credited with

so definite a purpose as was once thought. It grew, as was the case with so many other of the sacred writings, by accretions from several hands, and would seem to have required for its composition a period of calm reflection quite unlike that immediately preceding the exile.

But the wide departure in the thought of God, and the constant assumption of an individual instead of a national relation to Him, are what make it impossible to think of Job as having been written by contemporaries of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. We are far here from the prophetic ideas of the one and the priestly ideas of the other. Job looks not to any oracle for a solution of his problem; and he says no word to indicate that he set any store by the ritual. He reasons and ponders, protests and pleads. Such a departure from the old attitude was not taken in a day, it implies the changed circumstances, spirit, and outlook which only centuries could have brought about. It is little to say that this poem is two hundred and fifty years nearer to us than the book of Ezekiel. Ezra's ritualistic reformation could not have so subsided in less than a hundred years.

Casual observation reveals the fact that the book falls into several divisions, and further study shows that these are the work of different hands. As we

have already seen, the prologue, with its curious representation of Satan having an agreeable interview with Yahwè, belongs apparently to an older writing, in the body of which Satan was really represented as doing something. It cannot, however, be much older, as Satan is unknown to Jewish thought before the exile. In the next thirty chapters (Noyes divided them better into nineteen) we have the poem substantially as it stood originally, the obvious termination being (31: 40), "The words of Job are ended." Another speech of Job (42: 1-6), after that statement, betrays another writer. But these thirty chapters are apparently the work of two poets, the first for some reason halting at the end of chapter 19. His is the original conception, and he, perhaps, symbolizes in his hero the suffering people of Israel. If such is the case, his purpose seems to be "to suggest that righteous Israel's sufferings were an honor, as they showed a disinterested service of God" (Cheyne). The continuation (chaps. 20-31), which has been tampered with and disarranged, presents a somewhat different conception of the hero. His tender piety gives way to a spirit of criticism and high defiance. God is even accused of being non-moral. The philosophical difficulties in the way of a religious interpretation of life are strongly put, but no solution is found. We are as

much as ever in the dark about the present and the future when we are told, "The words of Job are ended"

Later on, another writer adds to the preceding the speeches of Elihu, who is brought in to supplement the lectures of Job's other friends, as it seemed not quite right that the audacious Job should have the last word. But the speeches are a rather feeble restatement of what had been said before, and Job may well keep silence.

Finally, yet another and a more ambitious writer conceives the idea of making Yahwè himself answer Job, and answer him "out of a whirlwind." It is a daring piece of work, and has been called "the great poetical ornament of the book." But, simmered down to a line of prose, Yahwè's justification of the ways of Providence in the infliction of unmerited pain upon us mortals consists in his unapproachable greatness and our contemptible ignorance and insignificance. It is probably the best word that could be said for Yahwè from the Jewish point of view, though not what we can call satisfactory. Job, overawed, could say, as every murmuring sufferer can say :

"I know that thou canst do every thing,  
And that no purpose of thine can be hindered.  
Who is he that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge ?

Thus have I uttered what I understood not,  
Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not"

And this writer adds the epilogue, which certainly neither of the two makers of the original poem would have consented to, making reparation to Job in kind for all that he had lost, so that he was doubly richer than at first, his new possessions including 14,000 sheep, 6000 camels, 1000 yoke of oxen, and 1000 sheasses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. All this he lived to enjoy one hundred and forty years. Any judge of fiction must say that the work loses sadly by this most unrealistic termination. It could have come to such an end only through several persons independently taking a hand in the enterprise. The completion of the poem in its present form may be set in the latter part of the fourth century B. C.

The Wisdom psalms doubtless came out of the period that saw the close of the book of Job; some of them, such as the 8th, 19th, 73d, may well have been written by one or another of the authors of that book; as the 49th by the author of Ecclesiastes. The book of Psalms is the most heterogeneous of the Bible books, as a book of hymns which should include all the hymns that have been used in Christian churches speaking our tongue would be the most heterogeneous book in the English language; and for a similar

reason, for the book of Psalms was the hymn-book of the temple for a longer time than Protestantism has existed, and grew just as our hymn-books grew.

Proverbs comes up as the next book of the Wisdom literature. Jewish tradition ascribes the authorship to Solomon, as it attributes the Law to Moses and the bulk of the Psalms to David. Only this much of the tradition is valid : As David, being a singer, may have written a psalm or two of the war-like, vengeful order ; as Moses, a leader and master of men, may have written a few simple tribal regulations ; so Solomon, who seems to have been a shrewd observer for his day, may well have been the author of a number of aphorisms which, after passing current for half a millennium or more, were incorporated by the wise men with their own sayings in this book. Many hands, we may be sure, had to do with the making of it, for this was just the kind of a book, being a collection for the most part of disconnected maxims, to receive an increment from every sagacious reader. It nowhere assumes, as do the Law and the prophets, to speak in the name of Yahwè ; it speaks humanly, as did the Greek philosophers, as any writer might speak to-day. Indeed it has the whole air of a modern book, sounds, as has been said, "as though it might have been written yesterday." It is even much more modern

than Job, for it has none of his puzzling over insoluble problems, his outcries against a personified Fate ; more modern than the Psalms, for it is free from any emotional disturbance. Nothing so well serves to account for such a writing as the influx of Greek thought in the period of the Greek domination of Palestine, which extended from 333 to 217 b. c. At this time active-minded Jews had become cosmopolitan ; traveled much, lived abroad, and drank in ideas which were current in the great world. The effect of such influences is signally seen in comparing Proverbs with the previous literary productions of this people.

The book — aside from the last two chapters, which are in the nature of an appendix — falls by its construction into divisions, indicating that it may have originally appeared in five separate parts, each, perhaps, brought out by a different editor. If so, as the appendix is avowedly of yet other authorship, we make out at least six “wise men” concerned in the composition and compilation. Three names are attached, not as writers but as sources : that of Solomon at the beginning, “The Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel,” — though this apparently was intended to cover only the first paragraph (distich), as otherwise we should hardly have two other chapters headed “Proverbs of Solomon,” — and those of Agur and

Lemuel in the last two chapters ; but it is even doubtful that these latter are names of persons. So the names of the writers are actually unrecoverable, as in fact has to be admitted of many other parts of the Bible. And that this should be the case was apparently the deliberate purpose of the writers. Often a writing could acquire acceptance only by taking a name that did not belong to it.

Among the wise men there was considerable variety of thought, and this very naturally, as their illumination was not in any old book or formula, but in their own minds and hearts, in what they were pleased to call Wisdom, *i. e.*, the intuition of the well-instructed, well-disciplined spirit. Inevitably this wisdom would take as many forms as there were types of mind among the writers. Thus a marked difference of tone is found between Job and Proverbs ; Ecclesiastes is written from still another point of view. The puzzled Job calls in question the justice of God in His dealing with mankind ; the proverb writers pass that problem by and set themselves to coining maxims for making the best of every situation by a right use of knowledge ; the Preacher, as the author of Ecclesiastes calls himself, while a believer in God and in uprightness of life, goes to extremes of pessimistic skepticism about the order of the world, finds everything vanity

to which a man can turn his hand or his heart, even wisdom itself going into the same category, and the best advice he can give is to get what enjoyment out of life one can. He sees nothing beyond this present life, in which he doubtless agreed with the great prophets, with this difference, that they said nothing about it, the theory of immortality not having been broached in Israel in their day Before the writing of Ecclesiastes, however, that theory had come over from Greece and had gained some adhesions. As it seems nonsensical to this writer, he takes ground against it; one fate, he declares, comes to man and beast, they have both one breath, both are of the dust, and both turn to dust again. Any hope of revival, of escape from extermination, is illusion, vanity All this has a gloomy, dispiriting sound now, and one wonders how Ecclesiastes struck people when first published. We know that the book was not readily received into the sacred canon, that in the early councils strenuous objections were made to it; and one cannot but be surprised that when once question was raised in regard to its claims it should have been able to acquire and hold its place. But by that time tradition had given the authorship to Solomon, and the royal name carried much weight. Then, there were some minds among the influential who could not but

feel a genuine respect for a writer who so fearlessly expressed his honest opinions. The book represents the extreme of skepticism among the Jewish sages, the ultimate in which the doctrine of guidance by wisdom, or, as we should say, by culture, eventuates. It originated in the same period with the other Wisdom books already considered, probably following shortly after Proverbs.

All the Wisdom literature so far considered found place in the canon; there remain two other writings which barely failed of admission, one apparently because it did not set up the claim of being by an ancient worthy, the other because it appeared after the canon was practically closed. These are Ecclesiasticus, and the Book of Wisdom or, as the latter is generally called, The Wisdom of Solomon. Ecclesiasticus is the work of Jesus ben Sira, a learned, traveled Jew of Palestine who lived at the beginning of the second century B.C. A grandson of his translated it into Greek for the benefit of the Greek-speaking Jews of Alexandria, and from this it has gone into other languages. Only within the last few years has discovery been made of fragments of the Hebrew text. These scraps, all together, now cover about two-thirds of the book, and are prized as a rather remarkable find. They are about a thousand years old, and give us, doubtless with fair fidelity,

ity, the words of the author as they came from his hand about 180 B.C. That was the period when the canon was closing, and only by rare chance could a writing then be admitted; but one cannot but think that a grave mistake was made in letting Ecclesiastes in and shutting Ecclesiasticus out, the latter being unmistakably the nobler work. It is truer to the line of Hebrew development, more bracing, more devout, replete with a higher wisdom. Though classed among the sages, the author shows none of the indifference of the previous Wisdom writers to the Law and the Liturgy. He loves them both, and in praising wisdom he is pleased to acknowledge that it comes through these. Wisdom is contained, he says,

“In the book of the covenant of God most high,  
In the Law which Moses commanded  
For a heritage unto the children of Israel.  
If thou desirest wisdom, keep the commandments,  
For the fear of Yahwè is the beginning of wisdom.”

But this wisdom does not consist in punctilious performance of ceremonies, nor in effusive displays of feeling, but in knowledge of what is true and right, for this author is first of all a sage and holds with the sages in this. The burden of his exhortation is :

“Gather instruction from thy youth up;  
Set not thy heart upon thy goods;  
Strive for the truth unto death,

Search and seek, and it shall be made known to thee  
Wisdom exalteth her sons  
And taketh hold of them that seek her  
He that loveth her loveth life,  
And they that seek to her early shall be filled with gladness ”

We are the more drawn to this book because there is good reason to think that another Jesus, of whom we have heard more, suffused his spirit with it. The full evidence of this is not to be set forth here, but a few of the parallelisms found in the Sermon on the Mount may fitly be noted.

“Blessed are the meek,” said Jesus; Ben Sira had said: “The Lord is glorified of them that are lowly.”

Jesus said: “Agree with thy adversary quickly, lest haply he deliver thee to the judge,” etc. Ben Sira said: “Contend not with a mighty man, lest haply thou fall into his hands.”

Jesus said: “Blessed are the pure in heart.” Ben Sira’s words are: “Blessed is he whose soul doth not condemn him.”

Jesus speaks of the divine forgiveness and of the readiness of the Father in heaven to “give good things to them that ask him” Ben Sira exclaims: “How great is the mercy of the Lord, and his forgiveness to them that turn unto him !”

“Swear not at all,” says Jesus; Ben Sira said: “Accustom not thy mouth to an oath.”

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," said Jesus. The precept of Ben Sira is : "Bestow thy treasure according to the commandments of the Most High, and it shall profit thee more than gold"

Jesus put the feeling of brotherhood and the doing of a human duty before all sacrifices made in the temple, and said "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go away ; first be reconciled to thy brother." The not less noble words of Ben Sira are :

"He that keepeth the Law maketh offerings,  
 He that taketh heed to the commandments sacrificeth a peace-offering  
 He that requiteth a good turn offereth fine flour;  
 And he that giveth alms sacrificeth a thank-offering  
 To depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the Lord;  
 To turn away from unrighteousness is a propitiation"\*

One cannot intelligently read this book and the book of Proverbs without being impressed with the progress of Jewish thought toward the New Testament standard. We see a notable evolution of ethical ideas, and a growing disposition to base religion distinctly upon these ideas. There is clear recognition of intellectual values, knowledge is extolled alongside of

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\* Ecclus 3 20, 8 1, 14 2, 17 29, 23 9, 29 11, 35 1-3

virtue. It is particularly worthy of note in this connection that there were schools in all parts of Judea in those days in which such mental training was given as the age afforded. In the more advanced of these schools the Greek language must have been taught, opening up to students the treasures of Greek philosophy. More particularly was wide acquaintance with the world's thought offered to the considerable colony of Jews resident in Alexandria, then a seat of great mental as well as commercial activity.

One of these Alexandrian Jews, apparently early in the first century B. C., wrote the last piece of Wisdom literature that we have to consider. It is called *The Wisdom of Solomon*, though written in Greek, a language of which Solomon may never have heard. But this title, together with a real ability in the writing, gave it great vogue in the early Christian centuries. It was clothed with full canonicity by the Council of Trent, and is still accepted as an inspired scripture by the Roman Church, though relegated by Protestants to the rank of apocrypha. Its fortune was to appear a little too late to secure a firm footing among the Sacred Writings; still it seems to have passed muster very well for a time, and there are rather striking evidences of its use by New Testament writers. Thus, in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is made to say. "If I

have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?" — which seems to be a reminiscence of Wisdom 9: 16: "Hardly do we divine the things that are on earth, the things that are in the heavens, who ever yet traced out?" In Acts we read: "The times of ignorance God indeed overlooked; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." The parallel in Wisdom is (11: 23): "Thou hast mercy on all men; thou overlookest the sins of men to the end that they may repent." The whole symbolism of "the armor of God" in Ephesians appears to come from this source, where we have (5: 17 f.) the "complete armor," the "breastplate of righteousness," the "helmet of judgment unfeigned," the "shield of holiness," and the "sword" of a quickened spirit. Many other phrases of the book reappear here and there, of which note the unusual appellation, "God, the Savior of all" (I Tim. 4: 10).

The writer, from his foreign residence, is much more decidedly influenced by Greek thought than his predecessors of the Wisdom school, all of whom, with the probable exception of Job, are touched by it. This comes out in his laudation of the virtues of moderation, practical sense, justice, and fortitude; in his assurance of immortality and his notion of the retrib-

utory character of the life beyond. On these latter points he made a far departure from traditional Jewish thought, which is marked by a singular reticence. It is a startling reflection that exclusion of this book from the canon left the Old Testament without the word "immortality" or the word "immortal." Christians are wont to meet this fact with the claim that immortality is brought to light in the Gospel; but the Gospel hardly matches the affirmations of this book. "God created man to be immortal," it says, "and made him to be an image of his own eternity." To be sure, affirmations are not proofs; but in default of proofs, there are times when we welcome the unsupported affirmation. The poverty of the canonical scriptures in bold and bracing assurances of a future life is never quite so apparent as when one goes searching for suitable selections to use in a funeral service. Then, if there be at all felt the need of harking back to antiquity, the Book of Wisdom is a recourse; and that not merely because of the stress it puts on the idea of personal immortality, but mainly because the writer went further, anticipating Emerson's well-known lines, —

"What is excellent,  
As God lives, is permanent," —

with the great saying, "Righteousness is immortal."

But, Greek as he is in his thought, he is far from admitting the fact. On the contrary, he will be first and last a Jew, even at the cost of being narrow and bigoted. The Jews are God's chosen people; other races are of little account; some of them, as the Egyptians, contemptible, fit only to be destroyed. The doctrine of a universal brotherhood is not yet, though there are signs of its approach; and nothing in Israel did so much directly to further its advent as did the Wisdom literature.

## CHAPTER VII

### Other Post-Exilic Writings.

Malachi — Obadiah — Joel — Canticles — Tobit — Persecution of the Jews by Antiochus — The Maccabæan revolt — Daniel — Key to the predictions — The fabulous narrative — Anticipation of New Testament doctrine — I Maccabees — Enoch — Other apocryphal books — Universalistic tendency, betokening the Christian policy of propaganda

CONSIDERATION of the Wisdom literature has carried us far down the stream of time, almost to the Christian era ; we must now retrace our course to gather up some of the literary drift scattered along the banks in the latter centuries of the Jewish State. The last Old Testament book in our Bible is Malachi, bearing a marginal date 397 B.C., — which is not far wrong, though the time cannot be so definitely stated as those figures would indicate, — and this was formerly supposed to be the youngest of the collection. But we have already considered ten Old Testament books which are now believed to be younger, and there are others still to be mentioned. Prophecy had long been dying out, but this, as we shall see, was not even the last of the prophecies, though nearly so.

Of the writer we know nothing whatever ; it is

even uncertain that the word Malachi, which means "messenger," was the name of a person. His book is only a leaflet; an expert type-writer could copy it all in twenty minutes. He takes the censorious tone of the early prophets towards priests and people, from which we infer that the Ezra-Nehemiah reform, after being some forty years in operation, left much yet to be desired. The priests winked at the trickery of the people in bringing the refuse of their flocks and herds, the sick and lame, to the altar as good enough for Yahwè, showing skepticism of his omniscience; they were also too much inclined to adopt the ceremonies of other cults. He represents Yahwè ready to turn away from such worshipers, and makes Him say that other nations will serve Him better. The passage in which this outburst is made is by far the broadest, clearest affirmation of the universality of the Hebrew religion to be found in the Old Testament. It is as follows (1:11):

"From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same  
My name shall be great among the nations  
And in every place shall incense be offered to my name,  
And a pure offering;  
For my name shall be great among the nations,  
Saith Yahwè of hosts."

Such an utterance seems the more remarkable when we consider the strict Judaism of the writer. But

we need not wonder at any narrowness, for even the breadth of Jesus' reported declaration to the Samaritan woman is coupled with the reservation, "salvation is of the Jews."

We may notice here the little book of Obadiah, which, small as it is, consisting of only twenty-one verses, has been the subject of much comment and controversy. Thus, in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* the article on Obadiah is of more than ten times the length of Obadiah itself. Of the author nothing whatever is known, and the great contention has been concerning the time in which he lived. The fact that seven of his twenty-one verses (1-6, 8) are identical, almost word for word, with verses in Jeremiah 49, is a difficulty that has been hard to get over or explain. One book must have borrowed; but which? If the writer of that 49th chapter borrowed from Obadiah, then of course Obadiah preceded him. Then the question comes up whether that chapter is Jeremiah's own, or by some one of the many who added their words to his. Nothing very definite as to date can be made out. Only this is to be said: the writing, short as it is, consists of two parts, the first, ending with the 16th verse, announcing a judgment upon Edom, and giving the ground of it, namely, the assistance Edom rendered Babylon long before in destroying Jerusalem.

In the second part the judgment is a thing long passed, and another situation has arisen. The best critics can say no more of the date of the first part than that it must be some time between 588 and 312. The second part is later.

Another writing presenting equal difficulties is Joel. Of the prophet of that name we know nothing, and the book has none of the distinct references to contemporary persons and events which with many other books serve to fix the date; so there is wide discrepancy of opinion in the matter. It has even been held to be the oldest of the prophetic writings, antedating Amos and Hosea; on the other hand recent investigators think it came out of the Persian period, four hundred years later. The absence of any complaint of idolatry indicates that idolatry had ceased among the Jews in the writer's time, and this did not come about till after the exile. He also speaks of the Greeks as a prominent people, which strongly points to the later date.

The work is a finished poem of three pictures. The first is a terrible desolation, the result of God's judgments upon the land for the sins of its people; the next shows Yahwè leading his people to repentance and to good works; the last represents the glorious rewards of obedience and well-doing. Several of the

choice passages are familiar on account of their exceeding beauty Every ear recognizes,

“Rend your hearts, and not your garments,  
And turn to Yahwè, your God,  
For he is gracious and merciful,  
Slow to anger, and of great kindness,  
And repenteth of a threatened evil”

Here, too, is the passage said to have been quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost, painting the marvels that should occur later on when God should pour out his spirit upon all flesh. And hark to these musical words falling in near the close :

“In that day shall the mountains drop down new wine,  
And the hills shall flow with milk,  
And all the streams of Judah shall flow with water  
A fountain shall come forth from the house of Yahwè<sup>1</sup>  
And shall water the valley of acacias”

Withal, the prophet is a pronounced ritualist, and calls for meat-offerings and drink-offerings, the blowing of a trumpet, and the proclamation of a fast ; indicating that he lived under the developed priestly Law.

Canticles, “the Song of Solomon,” as the authorized version has it, or, as it is more correctly called in the revised version, “The Song of Songs,” is the book which has had the most extraordinary fortune of all. Originally, as now seems, a series of wedding-songs used at the seven-day marriage-festivals, and falling

out of use in the times when there was no longer singing or joy in troubled Israel, it took on in the hands of interpreters a symbolical sense and began to pass for a sacred book. This tendency was confirmed by the final destruction of Jerusalem; councils decreed the soundness of the interpretation, and it stood unquestioned for a thousand years. But such a theory of the book has no longer any standing. The most competent admit that an error was committed in taking this for a sacred instead of a secular song,—a piece of work good enough in its way, but never intended to symbolize anything religious. The Song of Songs was probably written early in the third century.

The errors of admission into the canon were matched by errors of exclusion. As we have seen, Ecclesiasticus might have been substituted with advantage for Ecclesiastes, and now it may be added that the story of Tobit, written about 200 b. c., would have been more edifying scripture than Canticles. The fact that it is rated only apocrypha should keep no one from reading it, for it is one of the most engaging and consolatory bits of literature that have come down to us from antiquity. With the Roman Catholic Church it is sacred scripture, as are several other of our so-called apocryphal books, including I. and II. Maccabees.

The time has now arrived when it is matter of deep regret that these latter, at least I. Maccabees, should ever have been excluded by Protestant churches, for they are the thrilling history of the time out of which, as competent students are generally coming to see, came the book of Daniel, the last note of prophecy in Israel.

In the year 165 B.C. the Jews under Judas Macca-baeus were in full rebellion against their Syrian over-lord, Antiochus Epiphanes, who by seeking violently to subvert the religious customs of the people had aroused universal indignation. The crowning act of his tyranny had been to set up in the temple at Jerusalem an altar (some say a statue) of Olympian Zeus. This stirred Judea to its center. A poet breathed out the plaint of the 74th Psalm:

"O God! why hast thou cast us off forever?  
Thine enemies roar in the place of thine assemblies,  
Their own symbols have they set up for signs  
They have profaned and cast to the ground the dwelling-place of  
thy name"

The Maccabees had appealed to arms, and circumstances had favored the revolt, they had succeeded in winning some brilliant victories. The situation seemed to call for a great prophetic word to nerve the people to their bold undertaking. But though one might

have the prophetic spirit, it was too late for a prophet to discourse to any purpose in his own name. The sense of intimacy with God had given way to a sense of the divine majesty, and it seemed presumptuous for one to say any more, "Thus saith Yahwè." He who should do so would be called a fanatic and set aside. To have his word effective, the soul stirred to prophetic utterance must have recourse to an artifice which not infrequently before had been employed by writers of sacred books,—he must put his words into the mouth of some one who lived in the days when prophecy was in order.

Of a person by the name of Daniel there is no mention in any previous book, the two occurrences of it in Ezekiel being, as recent critics have shown, corruptions of *Enoch*. But not unlikely oral traditions of such a person were afloat, on which the writer of the new book based his statement that his hero, with whom he later identifies himself, was among the exiles who were taken to Babylonia. The writer, who had literary and imaginative powers of a high order, conceived the idea of developing these traditions, of writing a book as from the hand of this hero himself, giving a marvelous story of his experiences in Babylon, and setting forth in prophetic imagery the course of history for the three hundred and seventy

intervening years, to which he would add an actual prophecy of far more astonishing things shortly to come to pass, which he believed were at the moment heralded by the glorious achievements of Judas Maccabæus

The prediction found in the book of Jeremiah, whether Jeremiah's own or not, set the length of the captivity at seventy years. But there was no very satisfactory fulfillment of this, at the expiration of that time only a few of the Jews having returned; moreover the captivity had continued in Judea through the centuries, and often with a bitterness of oppression not felt in Babylonia. So it occurred to this author that there had been a misunderstanding of that prophetic passage. He conceived that the word "years" as there used had a hidden sense, meaning not ordinary years but "weeks of years." That is, to get at the true period the number must be multiplied by seven. The author of Daniel restates the old prophecy in his own symbols. He assumes that the captivity to Babylon began in 605, which is probably correct, as Nebuchadrezzar in that year defeated Necho and drove the Egyptians out of Syria, after which Jerusalem soon fell into his hands. "Seventy weeks are decreed," says this prophet, that is, seven times seventy years; and then he makes the specific

statement that from the starting-point (605 b. c.) to "the anointed one, the prince (Cyrus), shall be seven weeks," in plain words forty-nine years; which brings us down, for the date of Cyrus, to the year 556, and is well enough, as that monarch was then looming up as the coming conqueror. It will be remembered that Cyrus had been distinctly called by the Second Isaiah, "the anointed one" (the Messiah). Daniel, or rather the angel Gabriel who is talking to him, then proceeds to say that in sixty-two weeks the Holy City "shall be built again with street and moat, even in troublous times. And after the three score and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off." The sixty-two weeks stand for seven times sixty-two, or four hundred and thirty-four years; which from the starting-point, 605 b. c., brings us to the year 171, the year in which Onias, high-priest, an "anointed one," was cut off. Then we are told, "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary," which is what the prince Antiochus did in those years right under the eyes of this writer. And this prince, he says, "shall make a firm covenant with many for one week (seven years), and in the middle of the week (that is, toward the end of 168) he will cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease (which he did by setting up the altar of Zeus in the temple); and

at the end of the week, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolator." In other words, in 164, the very next year after this was written, judgment should fall upon Antiochus. From the fact that Antiochus actually came to his death in the year 164 b. c., this has been considered a remarkable prediction.\* But if the prophet hit this one point of what lay in the future, he missed almost everything else. He saw nothing of Rome, but made Israel to be the world-empire in succession of Greece, and produced a picture of events immediately to follow as far from what actually followed as could well be imagined.

As to what preceded his date the writer's errors are only such as came from defective knowledge of history. He makes the Babylonians of the time of the captivity speak the Chaldean language, when in fact the language then spoken by them was Aramaic. He has Babylon captured in the year 538 by "Darius the Mede," then said to be sixty-two years old; but it appears now that there never was any such king as Darius the Mede, and Darius I. of Persia was crowned

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\* The circumstances of his death are not well established. The foretelling of it in a time of insurrection as to take place in the following year may have prompted some fanatics to lay violent hands on the prince. For a Jewish account, now rather discredited, see II. Maccabees 1: 10-17

seventeen years later. He makes Xerxes the successor of Artaxerxes and contemporary with Alexander. He spells Nebuchadrezzar wrong, and his King “Belshazzar” is unknown to history. But, aside from a few such slips, he gets the general course of events straight until he comes down to the year in which he writes ; then, undertaking really to foretell, he conspicuously fails.

Thus even a slight examination of the prophetic part of the book indicates clearly enough its date. Its late origin is confirmed by a glance at the narrative portion. Here the first thing that strikes the reader is the multiplicity of most amazing miracles. Nebuchadrezzar has a dream which he wants interpreted, and calls in his magicians for the purpose. When they reach the palace he has forgotten his dream, and in his perplexity he requires them to tell him the dream as well as the interpretation, threatening in case of failure to put the whole of them to death. Of course they cannot ; but Daniel comes forward and proves fully equal to the occasion. The king is satisfied, and glorifies the God of Daniel. And yet he proceeds to make a colossal image of himself for the people to worship, and when the three friends of Daniel refuse to bow down, he has them cast into a flaming furnace, where they walk about in the midst

of the glowing fire without a singe, although the heat is so intense as to have killed the guards who thrust them in. King Nebuchadrezzar was a successful monarch and became very proud. It was necessary to humble this haughty spirit; so he was compelled to lay aside the scepter and go into the fields to eat grass like an ox for seven years.<sup>1</sup> Finally Daniel himself is cast into a den of lions, whereupon the beasts proved as harmless to him as kittens, although some other men, thrown in, were seized and devoured before ever they reached the bottom of the den. An eye-witness, even among the credulous ancients, never relates stories of this kind. They can only be told of a time long gone by. Again, when we go back to the period in which the scene is laid, they vanish. Ezekiel, who lived in Babylonia at the time, and the Second Isaiah, who was also there, knew nothing of these proceedings; nor did Ezra or Nehemiah, both of whom were on the ground.

As this book is near to the New Testament in time — within about two hundred and fifty years — we mark also a nearness in tone and teaching and in the very mechanism of revelation. The divine word comes through an angel, Gabriel by name, the same who in the Gospel of Luke announces the birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus; there are the doctrines

of immortality and the resurrection of the body, the proclamation of an imminent final judgment and of everlasting rewards and punishments. We are already in the atmosphere of John's Apocalypse.

The Old Testament canon was virtually closed before Daniel appeared; but the book made such appeal to Jewish patriotism, so met the demand of the hour, as to achieve at once great popularity. It forced its way into the canon as by a *coup de main*, whereupon the door was finally closed and bolted.\*

The remaining books to be mentioned are called apocryphal, a word that has come to mean doubtful or spurious. Its proper sense is *hidden*. Of the apocryphal books found (in some bibles) between the two Testaments, all except Esdras and the Prayer of Manasses are, in the Roman Catholic Church, held canonical (or deutero-canonical, which appears to mean practically the same thing). The Anglican and Lutheran churches commend them "for instruction," but by other authorities they are rejected altogether—left to fall, in the general Protestant estimation, into a sort of bogus scripture. It was natural that in the growing multiplicity of books some should be rejected,

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\* The old Jews rated their scriptures in three grades of sanctity, 1. the Law; 2. the Prophets, 3. Writings. Daniel was admitted only as a Writing.

but the discrimination exercised was far from infallible. Generally the Apocrypha may be called inferior to what goes before, but some of it is not. *I. Maccabees*, for instance, stands well alongside any of the Bible history-books, and puts some of them surely to shame. Compare this valuable record of Judean events through forty stirring years with the pretended account of affairs in Babylon for an equal period given in the book of Daniel.

There was no sudden change in the current of Jewish literature, in the second century B. C., to render the waters turbid which before had been crystal-pure. Books of edification, in poetry and in prose, continued to be written. The quality of sacred writ was not so clearly defined but that additions to an existing book might be made by a competent scribe, slyly, if not openly; and this was done to a considerable extent. Old stories reappeared in new dress, decked out in the fancies with which the eastern mind delights to obscure every feature of reality, the same passion before noted, for hiding behind some already famous name, holding on with the writers. A most extraordinary illustration of this passion for a pseudo-antiquity is the book of Enoch, which took shape about the middle of the second century B. C. The author had studied Daniel, and, in common with many others, had felt

keen disappointment to find the predictions of the book so completely failing of fulfillment. Evidently not enough time had been given there for the working out of Israel's salvation. The writer of Enoch gave the cabalistic numbers another shake, and lo! Jeremiah's seventy years and Daniel's seventy weeks of years become "seventy periods of heathen rulers"! When Israel had counted these seventy oppressors the end of her captivity would come. This book acquired no little vogue from its imposing claim to come down from Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," famed for his sanctity. It is even quoted in the New Testament (*Jude 14*), and quoted in such a way as to sanction its claim of antiquity. With this endorsement we should expect it to have a place in the canon; but it failed of this except with the Abyssinian Christians, to whom we are indebted for its preservation. It is of really great theological importance, fairly anticipating many of the doctrines of Christianity \*

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\* Here we find, a century before the first line of the New Testament was written, all the chief features of its doctrine respecting the "end of the world" and the "coming of the Son of Man", the same theater,—Jerusalem; the same time relatively to the writer,—the immediate generation, the hour at hand, the same harbingers,—wars and rumors of wars and the gathering of gentile armies against the elect, the same deliverance for the elect,—the advent of the Messiah with the holy angels, the same decisive solemnity,—the Son of Man on the throne of his glory, with all nations gathered

A less important writing of this century, dated back with a like audacity, is *The Testament of the XII Patriarchs*, which purports to be the dying commands of the twelve sons of Jacob, each dealing with a virtue or a vice of which his own life affords some apt illustration. The Hellenistic Jews of this time had also their Sibylline Oracles, in more or less conscious imitation of the Greeks, worked out however in accordance with their own traditions. There was much editing and revising of the old books, for the notion of Holy Scripture had not yet hardened to the point of putting a bar on emendations; a flaw might be corrected, an omission supplied. In regard to the book of Esther, for instance, the absence of the name of God in it had come to be something of a reproach. An Alexandrian Jew, to remedy this defect, produced several supple-

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before him, the same award,—unbelievers to a pit of fire in the valley of Hinnom, and the elect to the halls of the kingdom, to eat and drink at Messiah's table, the same accession to the society,—by the first resurrection sending up from Hades the souls of the pious dead, the same renovation of the earth,—the old Jerusalem thrown away and replaced by a new and heavenly, the same metamorphosis of mortal men,—to be as the angels, the same end to Messiah's time,—the second resurrection, and the second judgment of eternity, consigning the wicked angels to their doom, and the same new creation, transforming the heavenly world that it may answer to Paradise below. Here, in a book to which the New Testament itself appeals, we have the very drama of "last things" which reappears in the book of "Revelation" and in portions of the Gospels.—MARTINEAU.

mentary chapters in which the name of God occurs more than forty times. Three distinct additions were also made to the book of Daniel: The Song of the Three Children, The History of Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon. The Three Children are the three friends of Daniel who were subjected to the ordeal of the fiery furnace. To emphasize the security of these men in the midst of the flames the writer conceived the idea of putting into their mouth a song! Susanna is a falsely accused woman to whom rescue comes through the shrewdness of the boy Daniel in cross-examining the pretended witnesses. Bel and the Dragon are Babylonian images which Daniel destroys after making out their priests to be impostors. Out of the first century b. c. came also I. Esdras, an unhistorical enlargement of Ezra, and Judith, a striking bit of fiction, familiar to all lovers of art. The Prayer of Manasses, or Manasseh, is put into the mouth of the king of Judah of that name who undid the work of his father Hezekiah and went to quite a Solomonic extreme of liberality toward the gods of heathendom. He was a very happy and prosperous king, contrary to the Jewish idea of what ought to have happened to him; and so the story was invented that he did come to grief, was taken in chains to Babylon and made to suffer there (II. Chron. 33:

10-13). The penitential prayer was apparently intended for insertion after the Chronicler's statement.

Many of the writings of this century were apocalyptic, making revelation of some way of escape for Israel out of a situation of thralldom which looked to be interminable. So many prophecies of deliverance had been made without result that it seemed necessary to bring an ever stronger authority. Some remarkable works appeared now as from Moses himself, the sanctified hero of the nation, the first great lawgiver. The most important of these is the book of Jubilees, so called from its chronological system, at the basis of which is the jubilee period of forty-nine years. It is a sort of commentary on Genesis and the Law, and assumes to have been made by Moses in the first year of the exodus. It is more bulky than any book of the Pentateuch, which it undertakes to defend and explain from the standpoint of the later Judaism. Another of these books is the Assumption of Moses, from which it is supposed that Jude obtained the statement which he adopts about the dispute between the angel Michael and Satan over the body of Moses. Thus on one and the same page of the Bible we have two books — this and Enoch — quoted as authorities, neither of which has a place even in our Apocrypha ! In regard to the Assumption of Moses it is of interest

to say that it was written during the lifetime of Jesus.

Besides the varied literary output already treated, dating not far from the Christian era and influential in forming the sentiment out of which Jesus and the first Christian writings arose, mention must be made of the Talmud, which had been forming for three hundred years — a body of doctrine, precept, and comment, enforcing, explaining, and adapting to ever varying conditions the old Law accredited to Moses. This is an extensive literature in itself, already largely developed at the Christian era, and an object of study to every thoughtful Jew. Among the most distinguished contributors to the Talmud was Hillel. In his precepts both Jesus and those writing in the name of Paul found some of their best thoughts already formulated. Hillel said: "Love peace, and seek after it; love mankind, and bring them to the Law." Once, we are told, when a heathen asked Hillel to show him the whole Jewish religion in a few words, the enlightened Rabbi answered: "Do not to others what thou wouldst not should be done to thee; this is the whole extent of the Law; all the rest is merely accessory; go now and learn to understand that." The Talmud is believed to have been the chief bond of union among the Jews since their

dispersion over the world, and also the most effective means of keeping alive among them the religious idea, the party rejecting the Talmud, the so-called Scriptural Jews, having fallen into an abject condition.

From this hasty review it will be seen that there is no such gap of silence between the writing of the two Testaments as one might think who had only the canonical books to go by. That was a period indeed of more than usual literary activity, the product, though not all of a high order, evidently exceeding in bulk the whole mass of the canonical scriptures. So much writing meant much thinking, and some of the thinkers had a forward look. Underneath all, there was a steady tendency to the breadth of view and the deliverance from ritual burdens that came with the Gospel

The real distinction between Judaism and Christianity is not so much a principle as a policy. The older faith never came to the full consciousness of any mission to convert the world ; it is essentially the religion of a race, and works no propaganda. And yet there are signs of the awakening of a wider thought in the later centuries of the Jewish State. From the time of exile, with growing frequency, intimations appear of a belief that the whole human race will eventually come to the service of Yahwè. Even

Zephaniah, with all his partiality for his own people, declares that the other nations shall have bestowed upon them "pure lips, so that they all of them may call upon the name of Yahwè, and serve him with one consent." The story is told of Jonah going to Nineveh and converting the whole city to the service of the true God. Such a conversion could not occur, but that such a story should be told is significant. We know from Josephus and others that wherever the Jews were established in the later days they made numerous converts. Most of the women of Damascus, we are told, were at one time led to embrace Judaism. And this outreaching movement is confirmed by the complaints of Roman historians and poets that "the detestable Jewish superstition" was finding adherents everywhere. Thus the first steps toward the missionary policy which marked Christianity from the time of Paul were taken by the Jews of a previous century, and the existence of Jewish communities in all the centers of commercial activity, in Asia Minor, in Egypt, in Greece, in Italy, and even in Spain, afforded the best possible conditions for a great religious propaganda when the fullness of time should come. And the signs were abounding that the time was at hand.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Development of a Spiritual Worship in Israel.

Change of a thousand years in the idea of God — Idolatry a thing of the past — Yahwè grows from a tribal deity to be the one only real God — Service of the great prophets in this process — Sharp friction at times with the priesthood — Deuteronomy designed to work harmony — Subsequent expansion of the ritual — On the other hand a reaching out for a spiritual worship — Job a monument of this — The Psalms — Piety in many of them sadly mixed with intolerance and ill-will — In others exceeding purity and power — Breadth and universality of a few.

WE have traced the development in Israel of Law and Liturgy, of Prophecy and Wisdom ; it remains now to inquire into the growth of pure religion, of a spiritual worship. As has been seen, during the early period when the people were turning from the worship of many to the worship of one, the conception of God did not greatly change. Israel's God was one, but still one of many, differing from the rest only as one race of men differs from another race. Like the rest, he was capricious and vengeful, dealing heavy blows for slight offenses,\* and

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\* As see I. Sam. 6. 19, II. Sam. 6. 6, 7, 24 1-24

requiring to be treated with exceeding tact His worship was only a modification of idolatrous practices in vogue among the nations round about. After a thousand years all this is changed. The Hebrew conception of God, and the Hebrew attitude toward Him, as expressed in Job, Proverbs, and certain of the Psalms, has attained a height of spirituality and philosophic grandeur hardly since surpassed. A glimpse at the process by which this change was brought about cannot fail to be interesting and instructive

It was not identical or coincident with either of the processes before mentioned, though indirectly affected by them, now helped and now hindered. In the period before the monarchy the Israelites reached the conviction that among the gods there was one favorable to them as a people, and on this basis the beginnings of their distinctive religion were formed. The route forward from this primitive leading idea led first to the service of this one God to the neglect of all the others,—a stage which the people as a body were fully four hundred years in making. Arrived at this point, which is conveniently called monolatry, the next station was monotheism — belief in one God and one alone — in attaining to which another century was passed. In bringing the people up to these points the main strength of the prophets was spent, and the

achievement did them great credit, especially as it was accompanied by strenuous efforts on their part to raise the moral standard of the community as far as regarded the mutual intercourse of its members. But the attainment of these ends, indispensable as it was, had some effects on the religious spirit which were far from favorable. The repudiation, first of reverence for the gods recognized round about, and then of their existence, tended directly to intensify the enmity of the Jews for other races, carrying them straight away from the idea of universal brotherhood on which a true world-religion must stand. The anomalous conjunction of Hebrew piety of a very tender order with outbursts of hatred and imprecations on people of other extraction, so commonly met with in the Psalms, and so shockingly marring compositions otherwise often superlatively admirable, is an inevitably bad result of the prophetic attitude. Religion was crippled by the very hand that gave it power.

But the power was real. The mournful piety of the first prophets whose word we have under their own hand is of a higher order than the world had seen down to their day. Overshadowed as they were with a sense that the sins of an idolatrous people were of too deep a dye ever to be washed out, they breathed their despairing lament with a pathos and a power

which somehow achieved the unhoped-for end. We sometimes regret that we have no authentic word of preacher of an earlier date than the first quarter of the eighth century, but it is to be remembered that for literature this is a very high antiquity. Few names of authors are older. By a narrow margin, Homer, Lycurgus,—what others? The ethico-religious appeal of Amos coming out of such a dim distance is striking in the extreme. Evidently from the tone of his reproaches he stood almost alone, but it is notable that, in a time of such darkness, when the service of God was only a round of bloody sacrifices, one should be found to cry out: “Thus saith Yahwè to the house of Israel ‘Seek ye me, and ye shall live . . . Seek good and not evil, that ye may live; and so Yahwè, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye say. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate . . . Shall not the day of Yahwè be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it? I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies . . . Take away from me the noise of your songs. But let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream’”

Isaiah in the next generation strikes the same note, and pours out at yet greater length his contempt for

the hollow formalities of the people's worship, winding up a strikingly denunciatory utterance with the exhortation : "Wash you, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well , seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." From these prophets we see that already at that early date the ritual had become a burden to the free spirit. Piety was being stifled by its own traditional expression. The priests in seeking to preserve religion through a maintenance of its forms were in fair way to find themselves in possession of a body from which the soul had departed And yet the priesthood, to whom was committed the conduct of public worship, could not suspend their ceremonies at the dictation of a few prophets , they were the functionaries of the people, set apart for specific duties which they would not be permitted to neglect. They too had a part in working out the genius of this people, an even more distinctive and conspicuous part than had the prophets. The primitive idea was that God's requirements were summed up in worship, and the oldest elements of the Law convey that idea (as see Ex. 34) ; so the business of the priesthood in the early centuries was to make the most of worship, to formulate it with precision and enforce it with rigor ; and that, too, not

less in the public interest than in the interest of their calling. The people's piety expressed itself through them, and expressed itself in the established ceremonies. This was the old conception of religion, and it held on after the migration to Canaan, unquestioned, it seems, for near five hundred years. Then among the prophets arose a few of extraordinary insight, courage, and power, who declared distinctly that there was a great mistake in this old theory of religion, and that if the truth were known it would appear that God requires not worship but righteousness. They set themselves strenuously to this announcement as a revelation to them from Yahwè. The effect was a new income of spiritual life for this people, a new epoch in their religious history. Even the priests—the best of them—were ultimately constrained to admit that the divine requirement is righteousness, and, while they contended for the maintenance of worship, contended for it as a means of attaining righteousness; and when, in the seventh century, the Deuteronomic Law came to be written, it was on this basis. That book, which was the first great expansion of the Mosaic legend, is an echo of the sturdy blows struck by the prophets—a mass of regulations touching the public and the private life, the ordering of all sorts of affairs, social, hygienic, domestic, commercial,

governmental, diplomatic, as well as ecclesiastic,—clearly indicating that these last were no longer to be considered, as heretofore, the whole thing. Here and there the pages of statutes are brightened with the glow of kindly sentiment, or elevated by an outburst of noble piety. Toward the close, after entreating the people to love God with all the heart and all the soul, to obey His voice and keep His commandments, the writer puts into the mouth of Yahwè this sublime passage on the facility of obedience: “For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, ‘Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us and make us to hear it, that we may do it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, ‘Who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us and make us to hear it, that we may do it?’ But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.” Thus is duty brought home to the individual, and the principle almost enunciated that the soul is itself the seat of authority and the source of Law.

Little as the Deuteronomic Law was given to priestly regulations, burnt-offerings, and sacrifices, that little seems to have been more than Jeremiah, who was in the full tide of his prophetic career at

the time this Law appeared, could approve, for he says.

" Thus saith Yahwè of Hosts, the God of Israel  
I speake not to your fathers, nor commanded them  
Concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices,  
At the time when I brought them out of the land of Egypt,  
But this command gave I to them  
• Hearken,' said I, ' to my voice,  
And I will be your God,  
And ye shall be my people  
And walk ye in all the ways which I command you,  
That it may go well with you ''

" How is it that ye say, ' We are wise,  
We possess the Law of Yahwè ' ?  
Behold, the false pen of the scribes  
Hath turned it into falsehood "

" Wash thy heart from wickedness, O Jerusalem,  
That thou mayst be saved "

But Deuteronomy was too much in his own spirit to be seriously opposed by Jeremiah. Prophecy had transformed the Law from a rule of ceremony to a rule of life in which ceremony had only a subordinate part. To the prophet's watchword, Righteousness the end, the priests had responded with the compromise : Worship, the means. Thus conceived, worship entered upon a greater development than ever ; prophecy itself soon became absorbed in it. The ritual grew to proportions of which the priests themselves before the exile had never dreamed.

This marvelous construction was completed and set forth, as we have seen, at the close of the fifth century. Built on the framework of sacrifice that had come down from immemorial time, it was worked out and decorated with all that symbolic art in an age of art-culture could contribute. Through the whole edifice poetry and music wove their airy tracery, covering, under their graceful tendrils, and hiding away, the revolting features inherited from a rude past. But this method of righteousness had the fault that, by its very impressiveness, it overshadowed and obscured the aim. The worshiper, absorbed in the mechanism, forgot that it had any ulterior purpose. Moreover, the worship itself in its externality came far short of a worship in spirit and in truth. The pomp of ceremony had the drawback it always has of suggesting an outward object of devotion, attainable through the senses and not immediate to the soul; it did not reveal God as spirit. The righteousness secured by the ritual was primarily a rightness of form; correctness of taste and of manners, rather than purity of heart. The compromise made by prophetism was therefore largely abortive, and spiritual conceptions of God and a spiritual worship were yet to seek.

The method of the old prophets had been to denounce the ritual as a vain show, a worship of the

outward akin to idolatry ; but by the beginning of the fourth century the ritual was too powerfully entrenched to be denounced to any purpose ; it could only be ignored by those who had found a better way. The better way chosen by the wise was direct communion with God, reached by calm reflection. The book of Job is a monument of this movement of the spirit. In its original form — that is, in the body of the book which makes the genuine Job — there is no mention of priest or of temple offerings ; one would never know from it that the Jews had a ritual. There is also an entire departure from the anthropomorphic theology of the prophets — a God apart, speaking to them as man to man. Of the angelology of Zechariah and of the old histories there is no trace. In the book of Job a philosophic soul turns his back on all that, and enters upon an independent contemplation of God and of the mysteries of His providence, — from which there result conceptions of Deity higher and truer than had ever before found an utterance, and a spiritual worship, a sweet and tender piety, especially attractive on account of its entire naturalness, reached without the intervention of any ritualistic machinery, any mediating appliances. This writer talks not of Yahwè ; no name of tutelary divinity suffices for him. His speech is of God, the

Maker of heaven and earth, and the unsearchable majesty of the theme has duly impressed him The Omnipotent discloses Himself on every hand :

“ He shaketh the earth out of her place,  
And the pillars thereof tremble.  
He commandeth the sun, and it riseth not,  
And he sealeth up the stars.  
He alone spreadeth out the heavens,  
And walketh upon the high waves of the sea  
He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiads,  
And the secret chambers of the south.  
He doeth great things past finding out,  
Yea, wonderful things without number.  
Lo ! he goeth by me, but I see him not;  
Should I call, and he make answer to me,  
I could not believe that he listened to my voice,—  
He who falleth upon me with a tempest,  
And multiplieth my wounds without cause ! ”

The innocent sufferer lacks not at all in apprehension of the Infinite Power ; few have so fitly voiced the awe, the adoration, which that Power inspires. And yet, in his feebleness and misery, the consciousness of uprightness emboldens him to stand up fearlessly before this dread and awful Presence.

“ O that I might speak with the Almighty !  
O that I might reason with God !  
Lo ! he slayeth me, and I have no hope ;  
Yet would I justify my ways before him.

“ Only do not unto me two things,  
Then will I not hide myself from thy presence :  
Let not thy hand be heavy upon me,

And let not thy terrors make me afraid.  
Then call upon me, and I will answer,  
Or I will speak, and answer thou me  
Wherefore dost thou hide thy face,  
And account me as thine enemy?  
Wilt thou put in fear the driven leaf?  
Wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?  
Thou hemmest in the souls of my feet,  
And I, like an abandoned thing, shall waste away,  
Like a garment which is moth-eaten."

Compare these lofty strains with the reported colloquies of Moses with Yahwè in the 32d and 33d chapters of Exodus, where, to turn away the wrath of Yahwè on account of the inconstancy of the people, Moses appeals to his pride, and reminds him of what the Egyptians will say if he forsakes his people now and leaves them to perish in the desert, and where we have the strangely crude representation of Yahwè withholding the sight of his face from Moses, but condescending to permit a furtive glimpse of his back. The step between this picture and that almost seems to reach from primitive man to the modern world.

The Psalms are the principal recourse of most readers of the Old Testament in quest of spiritual expression of the religious life; but the Psalms are a very mixed collection, having in this respect the character which an imaginary great hymn-book would have which should contain all the hymns that have been popular in one and another Christian church. Some

mount very high, some sink very low ; and the vexatious fact is that both the height and the depth are not infrequently touched in the same piece \* For the maledictions with which these compositions abound, it may be admitted that there was great provocation ; but they are not for that reason lifted into fit expressions of modern worship. Three-fourths of them are made suitable for such use only by careful elision Of the remaining fourth there are a few in which no word jars, and these, together with twenty or thirty which may be read with the omission of a line or two, must be considered among the supreme utterances of the religious soul voicing its worship to the Oversoul. These, for the most part, are of much later date than Job, and, coming from a great number of poets, reflect a variety of religious experience and of spiritual attitudes. Some of these writers are ritualists ; others are as far removed from ritualism as was Amos or Isaiah, and as pronounced in their opposition. "Offer sacrifices of righteousness," says one of these ; and another takes on the very tone and style of a prophet, making Yahwè speak :

"Hear, O my people, and I will speak !  
For I am God, thine own God.

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\* As see Pss 11, 21, 40, 55 58, 63, 68, 69, 71, 83, 109, 110, 137, 139, 149

I will take no bullock from thy house,  
Nor he-goat from thy folds,  
For all the beasts of the forest are mine,  
And the cattle on a thousand hills.  
I know all the birds of the mountains,  
And the wild beasts of the field are before me.  
If I were hungry, I would not tell thee,  
For the world is mine, and all that is therein.  
Do I eat the flesh of bulls,  
Or drink the blood of goats?  
Offer to God thanksgiving,  
And pay thy vows to the Most High!  
Then call upon me in the day of trouble,  
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me!"

But this of course is exceptional in a collection largely designed for use in the temple service. There is however a goodly number of the best psalms which, in the high manner of Job and Proverbs, ignore the sacrificial ceremonies, thus rising above circumstances of time and place and voicing universal longings, whereby they become the fit vehicles of worship in all times and places. There is a circle of psalms, directly dealing with worship in the sanctuary, of so general a character as to be good for all sanctuaries. Such are the 26th and, especially, the 27th, in the latter of which the worshiper expresses a desire to dwell in the sanctuary all the days of his life in adoration of the Eternal :

"For in the day of trouble he will hide me in his pavilion;  
Yea, in the secret place of his tabernacle will he shelter me."

And again, in the 84th we have one breaking out with the joyous exclamation, "How lovely are thy tabernacles!"

"I would rather stand on the threshold of the house of my God  
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.  
Yahwè giveth grace and glory;  
No good thing doth he withhold  
From them that walk uprightly"

In the 15th and the 24th the question is raised, Who shall ascend the holy hill? who offer the acceptable worship? And both have one answer:

"He that walketh uprightly, and doeth righteousness,  
And speaketh the truth from his heart,  
He that slandereth not with his tongue,  
That doeth no injury to his neighbor;  
Who sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not"

A considerable series especially modern in tone belong to the Wisdom literature already referred to.\* Some of these are not particularly inspiring, showing the sad limitations of knowledge in an age when science was not as yet; others, as, "The heavens declare the glory of God," "Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations," "Thou hast searched me and known me," are of an unfading sublimity, and are to be reckoned among the uppermost reaches of the spirit.†

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\* Chapter VI.

† The best are these nine. 8, 19, 33, 39, 49, 90, 104, 107, 139.

The sense of security and trust shown in many of the Psalms forms one of their chief titles to our affection. Here and there is breathed a spirit of absolute contentment, as in the strain beginning, "My portion hath fallen to me in pleasant places," and as in the familiar 23d, with its green pastures and still waters. And what confident surety is expressed in the 91st, "He who sitteth under the shelter of the Most High"!

When we come to prayer and praise, what expression have we to match the 42d and 43d, which really form one strain, beginning, —

"As the hart panteth for the water-brooks,  
So panteth my soul for thee, O God"?

As a majestic outpouring of the soul, consider the 65th. This is preeminently the psalm for all cults, and the writer even seems to have so intended it. No use is made of the name Yahwè. He begins by saying:

"To thee belongeth trust, to thee praise, O God in Zion" —

and immediately bethinks himself that this expression is too narrow, that God is to be praised elsewhere as well as in Zion, and he continues:

"O thou that hearest prayer!  
To thee shall all flesh come!"

And, as if to make more obvious the breadth of his conception, and to fit this song to be the prayer of the human world, he adds:

“They who dwell in the ends of the earth are awed by thy signs,  
Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and of the evening to  
rejoice”

It is a holy paean, ending in this burst of joy:

“Thou crownest the year with thy goodness,  
Thy footsteps drop fruitfulness,  
They drop it upon the pastures of the wilderness,  
And the hills are girded with gladness.  
The pastures are clothed with flocks,  
And the valleys are covered with corn,  
They shout, yea, they sing for joy”

The signs of wider outlook upon the world in the later Jewish writings are precious, lack of breadth being the one serious drawback to the old piety. The last hateful thing to dissociate itself from the religious sensibilities of this people was their enmity toward their neighbors. This was rooted in the traditional claim that they were a chosen people, the special charge of the Almighty. And this again resulted in their investing Him with the same enmities they felt themselves. So in Law and Prophecy and in many Psalms we find, side by side with noble and tender pieties, the most ruthless animosities. It was an immense step out of this narrowness into the breadth

of even the old Greeks, yet a step that had to be taken before a final and satisfactory spiritual worship could be evolved. A grateful hint of better things is found here and there, as in Job 31 : 29, where the righteous sufferer pleads his innocence of a sin for which he might justly have been punished :

“ If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me,  
And exulted when evil came upon him —  
(Nay, I have not suffered my mouth to sin  
By asking with curses his life) ”

The wide outreaching, to embrace in a common fellowship of worship, in Psalm 65, is paralleled in the prayer in Ecclesiasticus, chapter 36, which came out of the same period.\* The prayer makes appeal to “the God of all” :

“ Send thy fear upon all the nations,  
And let them see thy mighty power  
As thou wast sanctified in us before them,  
So be thou magnified in them before us,  
And let them know thee as we also have known thee.”

Such words are few and far between in the old literature ; they are the summits from which an enlightened few signaled the coming of a better day, when the heritage of Israel should broaden out to

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\* This, however, is not to fix the date. Both psalm and prayer, if the prayer, as it seems, is an insertion, are later than Ben Sira.

bless the whole round earth, and when it could be said : "The hour is coming when ye shall neither on this mountain (Gerizim) nor in Jerusalem (exclusively) worship the Father. The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth ; for such worshipers the Father seeketh. God is spirit ; and they who worship must worship in spirit and in truth."

## CHAPTER IX.

### The Old Testament Canon.

Same documents are in our Old Testament as were held sacred by the Jews before our era — Process of canonization began with the finding of Deuteronomy — Had great extension under Ezra — First canon consisted of the Law — Second and inferior canon of the Prophets — Date of this uncertain, but after 432 and before 180 B. C. — These canons closed, no additions to them possible — Third canon formed, of a third degree of sanctity — Remaining books of this class — Question, for a time, regarding admission of some of them — Much literature not included — Date of this canon also uncertain — Subsequent to 130 B. C. — Writings had to be reputed of considerable age to be admitted to the canon — Hence marked tendency to assume for documents a false antiquity — Myth of the reproduction of the whole Bible (Old Testament) and seventy other books by Esdras (Ezra).

WE know that from the third century many books were written among the Jews which did not find their way into the canonical scriptures, such books being still extant. Not a few earlier writings, now lost, shared the same exclusion. The question arises, on what principle was selection made, and by what authority? It is well now to have what light is available on this question

The word *canon* is Greek, and means primarily a

measure, a rule; from which it has the secondary sense of a regulation, a standard; applied to the scriptures, it means an authorized list, selected, measured by some standard; and so a standard of excellence by which other things can be measured. It is not practicable here to go into all the intricacies and obscurities involved in the formation of the Old Testament canon, but the main points which alone have a popular interest may be set forth

It is to be noted in the first place that we have in our Protestant bibles precisely the same documents that Jewish authorities had practically decided on before the Christian era. The parts, however, are not arranged in the same order, and there is not the same number of books. Instead of our thirty-nine, they by combinations made only twenty-four. There is an obvious absurdity in calling a leaflet of one or two pages a book, to avoid which they combined the twelve minor prophets in one book, called "The Twelve"; Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles were not needlessly divided each into two books; Nehemiah went in with Ezra. They had the same notion of the supernatural origin of these books that has since obtained, regarding them one and all as given by inspiration of God.

But this idea of inspiration was itself a thing of growth. When in the eighth century historians and

prophets whose works are preserved began to write, the books they produced had no such quality. The prophet to be sure made free use of the phrase "thus saith Yahwè," but this did not then give his utterance the character of a revelation; the expression was apparently regarded as merely a mode of emphasis. Indeed, the books of the first prophets and the prophets themselves had a hard time to maintain an existence.\* Amos was driven out of the kingdom of Israel, barely escaping with his life; the words of Hosea were spurned by those who heard them, when Jeremiah sent the book of his prophecies to the king of Judah the royal hands committed it to the flames. There had not been, up to that time, the least sign of the recognition of any book as sacred, except possibly in the reverence shown to the ark of the covenant, supposed to contain the "Ten Words" of Moses. No writer quotes the words of any other writer or refers to any book as sacred scripture,† but the references made are such as one author now might make to another.

With the finding of Deuteronomy in 621 B.C. a change is seen. That book begins to be referred to

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\* See Zech. 13·3-6

† I Kings 2·3 and II Kings 14·6 are regarded as editorial work after 621 B.C.

as "the Law," and takes on from the time of its imposing proclamation the character of a holy book. The immediate sponsors for its pretensions were the king and court and the priests of the temple, who in their council over the question called in the aid of a prophetess. These made up together a judicial body whose authority sufficed, at least with the multitude. Some murmuring among the well-informed there probably was; Jeremiah seems not to have been altogether pleased with the importance given to the ritual, moderate as it is in comparison to what came after; but on the whole the book was accepted as a revelation of the Law to Moses, and became at once sacrosanct. For nearly two hundred years it was the sole writing so regarded. Direct quotation is made from it by writers of this period, and it is always referred to with absolute reverence as the Law of Yahwè given by Moses. It constituted the sum total of the word of God to Israel, and it was only the substance of our present book of Deuteronomy. Thus the scriptural canon began. At this time there were afloat half-a-dozen books of prophecy, and sundry historical and legendary writings, but nobody thought of them as sacred books. No addition whatever was made until Ezra came from Babylon to Jerusalem "with the word of Yahwè in his hand" and read it to the assembled

multitude in the year 432 (revised chronology). The reading was finished in eight days, was then passed upon by the great synagogue, solemnly accepted and sealed on the twenty-fourth day of the month, from which time Israel had a very much enlarged Bible;— how much enlarged it is not possible to say with precision, but certainly by nothing less than the extended Priestly Law of the Pentateuch. The fusing of this with the different regulations of Deuteronomy, the modification of the latter to harmonize with the new law, the addition of Genesis and Joshua, followed in the next few years, borne in on the tide of the great reformation. By the beginning of the fourth century Israel had a Bible made up of the six books which together are called the Hexateuch. This was the first canon consisting of a *collection* of Sacred Books, and to it as first canon,— first in rank as well as in time, having the highest degree of sanctity,— nothing was ever added. A second and a third canon, of less and still less sanctity, were formed later on; but the point to be here fixed in mind is that, at the beginning of the fourth century B. c., and for a considerable time thereafter, the canon included the books of the Law (with Genesis and Joshua), and nothing more.

Of this there are abundant evidences. One is that the Samaritan canon never got beyond this stage, but

remained, from Ezra's time on, limited to the books of the Law. So of course, with the Samaritans, the Torah or Law was always synonymous with "the scriptures." They knew no other scriptures. That this for a time was the case with the Jews is evidenced by the fact that they, too, could, down to a late day, use the word Law in the sense of the whole body of scripture, a custom pointing unmistakably to the time when it was such. Thus in the Fourth Gospel we have Jesus saying, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said ye are gods'?" taking the expression not from the Law but from the Psalms. So a writer of one of the Pauline epistles (I. Cor. 14: 21) says, "In the Law it is written"—and quotes a passage from Isaiah. This, as Professor Budde says, would have been impossible if the words "canon" and "Law" had not originally had the same connotation, other books at a later time coming in for a share of the reverence at first given only to the Law. Finally, we have in II. Maccabees, a book of the first century b. c., in a letter addressed by Jews in Jerusalem to their brethren in Egypt, reference to a library which one of them had gathered together and which could be sent to Egypt if desired.\* The library is compared to one

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\* II Mac 2 13.

Nehemiah had, said to contain books of Kings and Prophets, Psalms "of David," and letters of kings—meaning of course heathen kings. Evidently books jumbled together in this fashion with letters of heathen kings, and called a "library," could not have been regarded by the writer and his circle as canonical books. The canonical books—that is, the books of the Law—are not mentioned in this connection. They are not reckoned part of a "library," but are kept aloof by themselves as things sacred.

Another point: when a book comes into the category of sacred writings it is by its very sanctity lifted into a measure of security from changes at the hands of editors and revisers. Now, it is perfectly evident that, while the Law remained substantially intact from the time of its announcement, the histories, prophecies, and Wisdom books underwent emendations from various hands, some of the books receiving large additions, which certainly could not have happened had they been regarded as holy books.

The formation of the second canon, that of the prophets,—with these the history books were included as being in a way prophetic,—is not so definitely determinable either as to time or means. We find, at various dates after Ezra, that these books were not canonical; and, at a yet later date, we find that they

are canonical; but the exact time when the change took place, or the manner of it, is not clear. The rabbinical tradition that there existed a council or assembly of learned priests and scribes whose business it was to pass upon such matters has no historical support. The "great synagogue," which has been imagined to be such a body, and which did accept the Book of the Law as revelation, was no other than the popular assembly of thousands to whom the book was read by Ezra. It was the voice of the people, influenced to be sure by the priests, that pronounced on the question in that case; and we may presume decision was made by the same authority in subsequent cases, though apparently not in the same manner. It is unlikely that the prophetic books were all elevated to the rank of sacred scripture at once; some of them, known as Former Prophets, had acquired a quasi-sacred character before the exile, and these would be the first to come into full acceptance. The steps toward even this, however, were slow, resisted doubtless by the priests, who as guardians of the Law were naturally indisposed to have any rivals set up for the people's reverence. But when once the three great prophets had won their way, the rest were sure of ultimately attaining the same sanctity.

Though we are in the dark as to the stages of this

process, we are able to fix a date before which it must have been completed. In Ecclesiasticus, which was written 180 B.C. or a few years earlier, the works of the prophets are referred to in such a way as to leave no doubt at all that they had then come to be considered canonical. The writer praises them all as next in honor after the Law. He speaks of the twelve minor prophets in a manner to indicate that they were already inscribed on one roll. At the beginning of the second century, then, the second canon, the canon of the Prophets, had been formed. How it was done we have no means of knowing. That it was by formal action of any authoritative body there is no evidence.

When in 432 the canon of the Law was formed, the idea was that the Law had then been given in full, no further legal commands were to be issued from on high. So the canonization of prophecy was deferred till, as was supposed, the last word of prophecy had been spoken. This step once fully taken, it was as impossible to admit another prophecy as to admit another law-book. So when, in 165 B.C., a belated prophecy did arrive, under the name of Daniel, it could not be admitted into this second canon. The book was never formally reckoned by the Jews as a prophecy, and had to take its place in a third canon known as the canon of Writings. This fact has a

double implication : first, that Daniel was not written, as formerly supposed, in the period of the exile, for had it been it would surely have been counted among the prophetical books ; and secondly, that some time before Daniel was written the canon of prophecy was closed.

There was, then, a period, the length of which we cannot precisely state, when the Hebrew Scriptures consisted solely of these two divisions, the Law and the Prophets. And this period was sufficiently long to establish a habit of speaking of the Bible as "the Law and the Prophets"—habit persistent enough to continue long after the third canon was formed. Just as the older custom of referring to the Old Testament as the "Law" pointed to the time when only the Hexateuch was canonized, so reference to it as "the Law and the Prophets" was a survival from the time when as yet the Psalms and the Wisdom books had not been admitted to the canon.

So far we have the first canon, which included only the Hexateuch, established toward the close of the fifth century ; and the second canon,—that of the prophets and history books, Judges, Samuel, and Kings,—formed, it would seem, toward the close of the third century, though not universally accepted till considerably later. But this leaves without recognition

a number of books which were written before the second canon was closed, and which nevertheless ultimately found their way into the scripture collection ; so, at a later date there must have been formed a third canon. As this was brought about within a period of which we are better informed, we may hope to learn something definite about it.

The difficulty of extending the list of sacred books had been rather increased than diminished by the multiplicity of candidates for canonization. Besides the writings dating from before the close of the second canon, say about the end of the third century, a considerable mass of religious literature with certain claims of recognition had appeared by the time the question of a third canon arose. How considerable the mass of these writings was may be inferred from the tradition that the rejected books numbered almost exactly three times the whole number of books in the Old Testament as finally arranged by the Jewish authorities.\* Keen discrimination certainly was used ; on what principles was it taken ?

The first principle acted on was, that the age of inspiration was long past ; that it closed in fact with the announcement of the Law by Ezra ; no work,

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\* II. Esd. 14. 44 f.

## *The Old Testament Canon*

therefore, could be admitted which was not written before the time of the Great Assembly (432). It at once cut off all books frankly of late authorship such as Maccabees and Ecclesiasticus. But many of the books either assumed to be old enough, or said nothing about them to indicate their youth to critical eyes; and a number of these succeeded in passing muster, though some of them as by the skin of their teeth.

The books included in the third canon, receiving the inferior designation of "Writings"—some "Traditions"—are Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Lamentations, and Daniel. Modern criticism regards the writing of all these, with the exception of the Psalms, subsequent to Ezra's Reformation; but criticism was not developed at the time of the third canon; and these books, most of which are believed to be the work of some ancient worthy, had no difficulty in passing as of the required age. Ruth, a story of which the scene is laid in the time of the Judges, excited no suspicion; Job was believed to be of yet higher antiquity; the Psalms attached themselves to the name of David; Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles to Solomon; Lamentations to Jeremiah; Daniel assumed to be out of the early Persian period.

period, as did also Esther. Hence all these on the face of them had the requisite years. Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah are now considered the work of one author, forming originally one book. The latter, as containing the record of the canonization of the books of the Law, was separated from Chronicles and admitted without hesitation. Chronicles, as Professor Budde thinks, barely squeezed in, and then only as an appendix. Ecclesiastes met with no little opposition, notwithstanding what purported to be the Solomonic signature. But ultimately the list was accepted, and the last step taken in the canonization of the books of the Jewish Scriptures.

Here too, as in the case of the second canon, it is not possible to fix upon the exact date at which the work was accomplished. In both cases the process, we may be sure, was gradual, some books arriving at the goal early, acclaimed with eagerness and unanimity, some lagging behind and accepted as sacred with doubt and hesitancy. And we must avoid the fancy that decision was taken by any formal action such as the vote of a deliberative assembly. There is no slightest evidence of anything of the kind in the pre-Christian centuries. At best, therefore, we could only hope to trace the beginning of the gradual process and determine the time within which it was restricted

The prologue to Ecclesiasticus, which was prefixed to the book about 130 B.C., indicates clearly that at that time the growth of a third canon had not begun. I. Maccabees, written about 100 B.C., has this sign of the beginning of the new canon — it cites a Psalm, the 79th, and cites it expressly as Holy Scripture. By the time of the writing of the Pauline epistles and Luke's Gospel, the process had gone far, as they refer to more than one of the books in like manner. But it is noteworthy that some of the books of this canon are nowhere quoted or in any way referred to in the New Testament. These are Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Esther, and Ezra. Though this proves nothing, it does leave uncertain the completion of the canon of the Old Testament in New Testament times.

We are able, however, from other testimony, to fix upon a date when the process was definitely completed. At the Council of Jewish rabbis held at Jamnia about A.D. 100 the canon was formally discussed, and, though lingering objections were made to one or two of the later books, the objections were overwhelmingly set aside and the discussion closed for all time.

The fact is not to be overlooked that, in the Jewish accounting, the canon always remained tripartite, having three degrees of holiness. The highest degree

belongs to the first part, the Law ; the second degree to the prophets (and old histories) ; the third and lowest degree to the eleven books of the last added scriptures. The illusive accepted notion concerning the age and origin of the books of the Law, the imposing representation of their deliverance to Moses amidst the thunders of Sinai, and of the marvelous manifestations of Yahwè to Moses, left no room for doubt that God in that time revealed Himself as He never did afterward. The words He is said then to have spoken had a sanctity unapproachable. From that age He retired away from the world, never again showing Himself as before. To the prophets He spoke, but only vaguely in visions and dreams, and their authority paled before that of Sinai wreathed in smoke and flaming with fire. In the books of the third canon He is so far removed that His voice is scarcely heard any more. The writers hardly venture any more the prophetic affirmation : "Thus saith Yahwè." They fall to relating the great disclosures He made in other days, to singing of the glories that have been, and to reasoning about plain human duties, such utterances being all that remain for the later and duller times. Not even the pushing back of the last writings into a time where they do not belong could save them from this contrast with

the works that went before. The old intimacy of the speaker with God is gone; the most to which one will pretend is a communication from an angel, Gabriel or Michael. There is the constant concession that no word of God can be spoken to compare for a moment with the Law, or even with the Prophets.

With Jews of New Testament times it was a felt necessity to clothe the writings of the second and third canons with an antiquity of at least five hundred years; to crowd them all up toward the time when God held converse with men. As already remarked, the restrictive rule in the formation of these canons was that no writing had any claim to be called Holy Scripture which was not produced as early as Ezra's deliverance of the Law. To make it appear certain that this principle was strictly applied, the story was concocted, and is told in Esdras (II Esd. 14), that by some sweeping accident every copy of the scriptures in existence was burned up, and that Yahwè commissioned Ezra to reproduce the whole from beginning to end. For this purpose the scribe retired forty days, taking with him five amanuenses. "And it came to pass on the morrow," he says, "that a voice called me, saying, Open thy mouth and drink what I give thee to drink. Then opened I my mouth, and behold, there was reached to me a full cup, filled,

as it were, with water, but the color of it was like fire. And I took it and drank ; and when I had drunk of it my heart uttered understanding, and wisdom grew in my breast, for my spirit retained its memory ; and my mouth was opened, and shut no more. The Most High gave understanding to the five men, and they wrote by course the things that were told them, in characters which they knew not, and they sat forty days. As for me, I spake in the daytime and by night I held not my tongue So in forty days were written fourscore and fourteen books." Thus the writer, who was contemporary with the authors of the earliest gospels, would cut off the possibility of any part of the Jewish Scriptures being less than five hundred years old at that time. But the principal interest of his fabulous story lies in the number of the books said to have been reproduced. The Jews, it will be remembered, so combine the books of the Old Testament as to make of them only twenty-four ; so Esdras' ninety-four were seventy in excess of the canon ; and the curious thing is, he considers these seventy uncanonical books superior to the canonical, too deep to be appreciated by the multitude, fit to be reserved for the wise. He says : "The Most High spake unto me, saying 'The first that thou hast written publish openly, and let the worthy and the un-

worthy read it ; but keep the seventy last, that thou mayest deliver them to such as be wise among thy people ; for in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the stream of knowledge." Among these seventy books of transcendent excellence he doubtless meant to include documents he himself was then—about A. D. 90—writing in the name of Ezra, dead five hundred years before. But hardly less preposterous theories of the scriptures have held on well down into these days.

The excellence of the Bible rests not merely on the genius of the individual writers, it rests also on the just discrimination which selected these writings out of a nation's literature as worthiest of reverence, and preserved them by an efficient though a factitious badge of distinction. Not all the standards of judgment were sound, but the result, on the whole, is so noble as to be an unimpeachable testimony to the good taste, the clear judgment, the ethical perspicacity, the spiritual discernment of the Jewish people ; for whether or not in Lawgiver, Prophet, Sage, and Psalmist we have the voice of God, in the canon we have unmistakably the voice of the people.



# **NEW TESTAMENT**



## CHAPTER X.

### The Gospel Sources.

Coming to the New Testament from the Old — Agreements and contrasts — Absence of literary men among the immediate disciples of Jesus — The making of a record left to the next generation — Many gospel narratives at length appear — Papias' declaration of the need of sifting these to get at the facts — Probability that fragments of writing, made by contemporaries, touching Jesus, his word and work, were in existence, copies if not originals, when our gospels were made — These would be their most trustworthy sources — Such the Logia, or Sayings, of Jesus — Gospel writers knit these together with oral tradition into connected narrative — Growth of legend — Indications on which the genuineness of an utterance attributed to Jesus may be predicated

N passing from the Old Testament to the New, the most casual reading shows marked divergences and equally marked coincidences. In the doctrine of God there is no sudden change, but a continuation of that development which we have already traced through more than a thousand years. The divine tenderness receives more emphasis ; God is commonly called by a more endearing name ; still the idea in the gospels is essentially the same as in the later psalms. Similarly with the ethical teaching. No abrupt departure

is seen save as the Gospel is contrasted with the old Law; with the later Wisdom writings it is in substantial harmony, or at least grows out of them quite naturally. The Sermon on the Mount collides here and there with the Pentateuch, but not with Proverbs. If Jesus by implication condemns Joshua, he accords with Job. Step by step down the centuries we approach the ethics of the New Testament. But in other respects this part of the Bible is in striking contrast with what went before. The New Testament forms itself around a personality. To begin with, we have four biographies of this hero. In the older scriptures there is nothing that approaches a biography. The book of Acts continues for a step the story of the hero, the epistles are largely devoted to developing a doctrine concerning him, and the Apocalypse has him winding up the affairs of this world. So the whole volume is distinctly Christocentric. There is nothing corresponding to this in the Old Testament. Aside from the four Law books, which are co-related, each book there has a purpose of its own, and is practically independent of every other; the parts have no necessary connection, do not cluster around an individual or an idea. In the matter of form, too, we note the total absence of verse in the New Testament, while in the original Hebrew of the

Old Testament there are half as many pages of verse as of prose. As literary productions the later writings are not up to the high mark set by some of the earlier; they depend for their strength almost wholly on their content. Another point of distinction is that while the prophets of the previous time wrote out their own words, the prophet of Nazareth, as far as we know, wrote nothing. Nor does it appear that he instructed anybody to commit his sayings to writing. This seems the more remarkable when we take into account the importance he himself set on these sayings (Matt 24: 35; Mark 8: 38; Luke 21: 33; John 12: 48). Very notable is it, too, considering the importance the world has since accorded them, that for a good many years, as far as we can now judge, nobody thought of writing them out to any considerable extent. This would imply that among the immediate disciples of Jesus there were no literary men. Surely, if they had included a Philo, or a Josephus, the result would have been different.

Just what was done toward the making of a record by those who had seen Jesus and listened to him, it is impossible to say. The book of Acts, which undertakes to narrate the doings of the apostles after the crucifixion, was not written, according to present opinion, till near one hundred years after that event,

and so is not decisive as to what went on ; but the absence in that work of any allusion to a life or sketch of Jesus having been made by an apostle is noteworthy, for if any one of them had done such a thing it would naturally be reckoned among the chief of the acts of the apostles. Still, that they should all have died without doing something of this kind implies a stolidity and a lack of provision for the needs of the future Church hard to suppose. What we are told by the writer of *Acts* is that he, who was not one of the twelve nor even a pupil of one of them, had written such a work, presumably the *Third Gospel*, at the beginning of which we have the statement that, before him, *many* had set their hand to the same task ; and he leaves us to infer that none of them had written with any more intimate knowledge of the subject than had he. “Many” is a word not used to designate two or three, it means a considerable number ; so this writer must have had in mind other writings in addition to *Matthew* and *Mark*. What these were is almost entirely matter of conjecture, but included in them must be the sources from which the gospels as we have them, particularly the first three, were largely drawn.

In direct and explicit reference to these sources the writers of the early Christian period are exasperatingly

lacking. Papias, a bishop of Phrygian Hierapolis in the first half of the second century, and the author of some books of which extracts have been preserved in Eusebius, is the earliest authority from whom we have anything definite. In his time the necessity was coming to be felt for a selection of an authoritative record of the words and deeds of Jesus, from the many and conflicting accounts afloat. Papias himself was displeased with most of the writings in circulation dealing with the period in question, which he designates as "voluminous falsehoods," and set his heart on finding out the facts from the lips of those who had received them from "the disciples of the Lord." He may have seen the daughters of Philip the evangelist, who dwelt in his native city about the time he was growing into manhood. From such researches as he could make he concluded that to the Commandments then current as "given from the Lord to the Faith" should be added as of authority certain sayings of the apostles, preserved by the Elders and by the successors of the Elders appointed by them. He mentions also approvingly a writing by Mark, whom he calls the interpreter of Peter (meaning, perhaps, that he put into Greek what he heard from Peter, who spoke only Aramaic), and a compilation by Matthew, which had received many "interpretations." He says nothing

of any other of our gospels, from which it is inferred that the Third and Fourth gospels had not then come into general acceptance.

The chief interest of Papias' account lies in the representation he plainly makes that there was current, within a hundred years from the crucifixion, a considerable mass of literature dealing with the gospel period; so much, in fact, and so varied, that the reader was confused and embarrassed by the disagreement of one account with another. The records needed to be sifted and set in order. This is precisely what Luke\* undertook to do, as he tells in his preface: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, it seemed good to me also, having accurately traced up all things from the first, to write to thee a connected account."

We are debarred, therefore, from supposing that our gospels were the only, or the first, writings of the kind, dealing with the same events. From careful study of these gospels, critics long since inferred the existence, at the time they were written, of earlier records of which the evangelists made a free use. Clearly enough to be made out were writings known

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\* The customary names of the four evangelists are used in this treatise without implication as to actual authorship

as the “Sayings (Logia) of Jesus,” which, besides his words, may have contained some narratives of his ministry; and, back of our Mark, could be posited an original Mark somewhat different; but Luke’s statement implies that there were more than these, and it is now believed that gospel records of one kind and another were quite numerous. These it would be the business of a person undertaking a fresh sketch to go over, using and combining the material according to his best judgment. This is what the writers of our first three gospels did, and they are properly called synoptists because, from the mass of what they had before them, they give a synopsis of Jesus’ career, though the original use of the designation by Griesbach was to mark the fact that the three have a common view. These sources of our gospels, with the exception of fragments quoted by the Church Fathers or gleaned from excavations, have perished. If we had them in hand now there would be the felt necessity of seeking out *their* sources, for they, for the most part, we may be sure, were not the original Christian writings. They, too, depended on records that preceded them, up to a date closely following the termination of the ministry of Jesus. Criticism based on this theory has only just begun, but that something can be done with it even on the existing text has been shown. Thus, a

study of Mark 9: 33-42, an excellently well authenticated passage, discloses four successive layers of tradition back of the last narrator.\* Other passages will yield as striking a result.

Just as it was absurd to suppose (as many once did, notwithstanding Luke's preface) that our gospels were the first biographical sketches of Jesus,—the least scientific study of them necessitating the supposition of sources from which they were drawn,—so is it absurd to hold these sources, which could not long have antedated the gospels, the first work of the kind to be undertaken. It has been urged, in apology for such an assumed irrational silence for thirty or forty years, that the early Christian expectation of a speedy return of the Master "in power and great glory" withheld the contemporaries of Jesus, and even the following generation, from realizing that there was any need of making this provision for the Church. Some influence such expectation may have had; yet it is to be observed that Second Adventists of our day are not generally neglectful of even the earthly needs of their children and children's children, so that we may well believe that an expectation similar to theirs was not a very potent reason with the first

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\* For the interesting working out of this, see *Encyclopædia Biblica*, column 1865.

Christians for delaying a spiritual provision for their children.

No doubt much was done orally from the first to preserve and perpetuate the gospel teaching; but an intelligent and educated class would not stop with that, and we may be sure there were Christians in apostolic times who were educated and intelligent. Some such persons must have been among the assemblies that listened to Jesus, and it would be strange indeed if, in many instances, minutes of what he said were not made by admiring auditors. His ministry was so short, lasting probably not more than a year, that there was not time for these memoranda to get lost before the shock of his arrest and shameful execution gave them a signal value as the nucleus of a kind of gospel-writing which then in all probability immediately began. Many an ardent disciple, having a few notes, would add to them from memory, and the result would be copied and distributed among the faithful. The next step would be that a few, of literary gifts, having a collection of these scraps, would weave them together into a connected account, with some local coloring. These collections would be circulated, and the original fragments out of which they were made would cease to be prized, and would pass out of existence. The collections, having as yet nothing of the

character of sacred scriptures, and differing materially among themselves, would be subject to change in the hands of the disciples, who would feel free to modify or suppress what did not accord with their recollection, and to add what they knew to be omitted In this way, in a few years, a set of more complete collections would be formed, and these would supersede the first, which would be set aside and be no more heard of. This process, we may be very confident, went on down to the time of the writing of our gospels, and with varying results. As doctrines of one kind and another began to spring up they would be woven in by their advocates, and a state of things would arise such as Papias complains of, when there would be a felt need of getting back to first traditions The chief task of the compiler became then the very reverse of what it had been ; he must delete and abridge the work of his predecessors ; good taste and good judgment were his main requisites. Our gospels, we may be sure, are very much less bulky than were their sources taken together. We know of the sources little more than what the gospels suggest of them The omissions we are unable much to trace, but no one can read the Oxyrhynchus fragment of the "Sayings of Jesus" without getting some idea of the careful excision performed by the final editors of the gospels. Fortunately

the older documents had not been canonized, and, while this permitted their distortion and corruption in the hands of the weak, the designing, and the superstitious, it enabled the men of good sense and right spirit to deal with them rigorously.

An interesting question arises as to the order in which the different elements of the gospel story formed themselves in the sources. Did the *words*, or the reported *acts* of Jesus have precedence? or were they both recorded together at each stage?

The fact that the collections were called Logia, "Sayings," although in their later forms they appear to have contained some narrative, points to a time when, as the name imports, they were composed exclusively of the *words* of Jesus. Assuming this to have been the case, the first form of narrative to attach itself to the discourses would be a simple itinerary connecting them together. Gradually, as time went by, additional incidents would be inserted as one and another person called them to mind. And after ten or twenty years, as legends of Jesus began to grow and it was coming to be thought that he was something more than man, and was freely called Christ and Lord, some of the marvelous stories which had passed from mouth to mouth found their way into these writings. This kind of thing, once started,

grew apace, and continued its growth long after the writing of our accepted gospels, as is shown from the fact that miraculous incidents not found in the oldest appear in later gospels, and even in later manuscripts of the same gospel. As a rule, miracle-stories are not told by eye-witnesses of the asserted marvels, nor in the lifetime of any possible eye-witnesses; they have to be set in a somewhat hazy past, quite beyond the reach of investigation. People naively say now, "the days of miracles are past," all unconscious that the generations before them have said the same thing from immemorial ages. The day of miracles has always been past, and it has been necessary to relate them, if they were to be related, as things of the past. This is the rule, yet it is a rule to which there are curious exceptions. Wonders of healing, seemingly miraculous, are, as we all know, not infrequently reported at the time of their alleged taking place. We do not always credit the stories, but they are told, and usually with accompaniments characteristic of our mercenary age—a degradation from which the old tradition is saved. It is nowhere related that Jesus gave "lessons," for money, in his art of healing, or took pay for any marvelous cure. Nevertheless, though forming no part of his gospel, there was, according to the synoptists, a profusion of healing.

Some of the accounts doubtless had a certain foundation, came out of the most original of the gospel sources; but a great part of the more marvelous must have been later accretions: the most marvelous were not in the common source from which the synoptics drew. Thus, the bringing of Simon's wife's mother out of a fever appears to belong to the earliest tradition, as it is related by all three; but each later one of the three varies the account to make it appear more miraculous. Mark has it that Jesus "came and took her by the hand and lifted her up," whereupon the fever left her. Matthew strengthens the report by saying that he only "touched her hand." Luke, to put the supernaturalness of the act beyond question, or because in his source the story had already assumed another form, has it that Jesus "stood over her and rebuked the fever," implying a belief, old as Babylon, that disease is a demon that can be scolded and frightened away. There is one account of the healing of a leper, which, as it appears in all of the first three gospels, must have got into the common source, probably at a late day, but Luke has a story of wholesale cure of leprosy which was not in that source,—ten lepers healed by word of mouth as they "stood afar off." The giving of sight to the blind, told of Elisha, was supposed to be indicated by the prophets as a function

of the Messiah (Is 35 : 5 , 42 : 7) ; so with the belief that Jesus was the Messiah there grew up a legend of this sort. That it does not belong to the earliest tradition, but originated in the mind of a later narrator, whose story was afterward freely modified, appears from the fact that the accounts in the three gospels are without agreement as to time, place, number of the blind, or mode of cure ; one having it that the marvel was done by spitting on the eyes, another, by touching them, and the third, by the word of command, "Receive thy sight !" From sources which are in general agreement the three gospels report the discussion on the charge made by scribes or Pharisees that Jesus cast out demons through some league with Satan ; but the particular source used by Matthew was more developed than the others, since in Matthew the paragraph is introduced by the statement that Jesus so successfully healed a person "possessed by a demon," and who was also blind and dumb, that the subject actually "spoke and saw." The cure of a woman "bent together by a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years," and that of the man with dropsy, must be late accretions, as they were in a source used only by Luke (or they may have been derived by him from oral tradition) Of yet more obviously late origin, being unknown to the common

source, is Luke's story of the raising to life from his coffin, as it was borne through the street, of the son of a widow of Nain. It may be doubted that this astounding narrative had existence in any previous writing, or had even an oral currency.\*

As examples of derivation from very late sources may be mentioned the account in Matthew of Jesus sending Peter out to catch a fish in whose gills he should find the needed coin to pay their poll-tax; the report in Luke that Zacharias was punished with dumbness for not believing what the angel Gabriel told him; also his story (5 : 4-10) of the marvelous catch of fishes; and John's imposing account of the raising of Lazarus,—none of which was in the source used by any one of the other evangelists.

That the written sources were chiefly made up of sayings, and the oral of narratives, may be inferred from the fact that in the synoptics there is a much closer agreement on the sayings than on the narratives. Then again, it is quite natural that the sayings should be the first to be written, as, though doubtless considered the more important, they were not so easily carried in memory. The fact that they were

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\* Dr. Cheyne appears to think this marvel a contribution of Luke's own, patterned on stories of Elijah and Elisha. No trace is to be found of any such place as Nain.

written long before they appeared in our gospels does not, however, guaranty their authenticity. Additions were made, in the course of half a century or so, even to the words of Jesus, though doubtless there was less disposition to do this than to fabricate narratives about him. The records made during his ministry, if there were such, or from the memory of loving disciples soon after its close, would come the nearest to giving us his thoughts in his own words, and so to satisfying our principal quest. Quite a good many passages give evidence of having been so preserved, and these, dealing with the highest things, form the real core of the Gospel message. They are characterized by a style utterly different from that of any one of the compilers, and by a clearness and profundity of thought to which they all are strangers. We have, therefore, two sets of indications bearing on the genuineness of utterances attributed to Jesus, one resting on the sources, the other on the substance. The concurrence of all three synoptics in a statement, forming what is called the Triple Tradition, is taken to indicate an agreement of their sources, and so to be a strong mark of genuineness. Where two of the synoptics concur, with or without John, we have a Double Tradition, which carries considerable weight, especially where not directly opposed by the third synoptic, as

it shows, so far, agreement of the sources. There is indeed a possibility that the exact agreements, particularly marked between Matthew and Luke, may have resulted from the later writer borrowing directly from the preceding; but this weakens the argument less than might be supposed, for the borrowing would in any case hardly go beyond what the borrower found to be in substantial agreement with his earlier sources. The other set of indications lie in the recognizable style, thought, and spirit of Jesus, whose manifest superiority to his biographers is so great that the acute reader is not likely to take their words for his. The force of the latter indications may even overbear the absence of the former. For example, we have in Luke, and in Luke alone,—therefore unsupported by the triple, or by any double, tradition,—the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son. Now, though we know Luke to be a tender, sympathetic soul, and a writer of some skill, we know also his limitations, which in some particulars are very great, so great that we cannot think of him as capable of creations like those. He must have got the parables from oral tradition, or, more probably, from some written source not available to the other evangelists. A multitude of the sayings of Jesus, as we may naturally suppose, and as we are expressly told at the end

of the Fourth Gospel, were never written out in the gospels or elsewhere. Certain great things, like these parables, may have been heard by only a few, and distinctly remembered by only one. If that one chanced to be a reticent, retiring person, living in some out of the way place, the utterance might slumber with him, and his transcription of it, if he made one, might not get into the current collections in fifty years. Though a fate like this could hardly befall any considerable number of the sayings, it is easy to see that there might be such cases. A really great utterance, therefore, having intrinsic marks of genuineness, is not to be hastily voted spurious for lacking the support of the common source.

It will be observed that the theory of the development of the gospels from a succession of enlarging sources is analogous to the development of the books of the Law, set forth in previous chapters, and to the growth of such composites of prophecy as Isaiah and Jeremiah. Each successive collection of the sayings and doings of Jesus, of which there were we know not how many, was a kind of revised and expanded gospel which, having as yet nothing of the character of Holy Scripture, but written for the comfort and edification of the disciples, could be freely emended from time to time. The period in which the process was carried

through, ending in our gospels, was comparatively short, hardly more than one hundred years; but we must remember that it was a period marked by an extraordinary religious movement and a rapid transformation of ideas. The preaching of Jesus had given a mighty impetus to universalistic conceptions; he had led his disciples to feel that they were commissioned to preach the Gospel to all nations; the exclusive bars of Judaism were crumbling away. Doctrines were developing concerning the nature of the Christ and of his office in the world's redemption, legends of marvels attending his birth, his life, and his death;—and this mass of material together, though of a more or less transient and mistaken character, served as the basis of the early Church in an age that knew not how better to build. But in it all there was conserved the treasure of the divine Word spoken by the Master, having in itself power in the fullness of time to renew and rebuild in a far more glorious fashion.

## CHAPTER XI.

### The Synoptic Gospels.

Process of formation supposed to have gone on in the sources continued in the formation of the gospels—Originals of Matthew and Mark—Luke apparently the latest of the three gospels—Probable date of Matthew—Evidences that Mark is older—Additions to Mark—Matthew's Gospel—Written for Jewish Christians—Lacks the directness and consistency of Mark—Makes valuable additions from other sources—Review of the additions—Luke's Gospel—Its additions to both of the others

**A** PROCESS similar to that supposed to have gone on in the making of the sources continued in the formation of the first three gospels of the canon. They are refinements, extensions at some points, abridgments at others, of what went before. The first two are believed by many to be each a recension, with modifications, of a previous writing from which it derived its name. A tradition of the second century, standing, it must be confessed, on rather slender basis, has it that the apostle Matthew wrote in Hebrew “Memoirs” of Jesus,—a compilation of his “oracles,” together with some account of his life. The existing Gospel of Matthew has been supposed

to be a development of this apostolic writing. But any apostolic writing of the kind, if such there was, must have been very brief, inadequate, and unsatisfactory, or it would surely have taken authoritative rank and rendered needless and even impertinent the action of the "many" of Luke's preface, who, he says, "have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us." The fact that gospels multiplied goes to confirm what is here presupposed, that the earliest records were slight, that from small beginnings the gospel writings grew through the decades for a century or more.

An "original Mark," on which the present gospel of that name was fashioned, though unsupported by tradition, has a better standing, as it seems necessary to the explanation of many remarkable agreements and disagreements between the three accounts before us. The problem is too complex to be gone into here, if indeed it has not been put out of consideration by the hypothesis of numerous sources, for most of which we have not even a name. On the supposition of many and differing sources, the project of getting at the precise way our gospels were produced, or of forming a definite and perfectly adequate *theory* of the way they were produced, — what documents this, that, and the other writer had before him, — becomes practically

impossible; nevertheless, it is necessary to suppose that by *some* distribution of the unknown sources the result we see was reached.

It would be safe on general principles to assume that the three gospels we are here considering were not simultaneously written, that they appeared successively, each later writer having the preceding among his sources. Such an assumption is supported by the testimony of the earliest of the Christian Fathers, which represents as in use about the middle of the second century the two gospels, Matthew and Mark, and is silent concerning Luke as well as John, indicating that these latter, if existing, had not then come into general acceptance. From many and various considerations the disposition of scholars now is to place the writing of Luke as late as 120, or even 130; before which time there is evidence that the other synoptics were in use As to Matthew, it contains in itself ample evidence of having been written after the year 70, — *e. g.*, to mention nothing more, the picture of the destruction of Jerusalem in chapter 24, and the parable of the wedding-feast in chapter 22, evidently drawn from the same event, and, as the lower limit, it must for the most part have been in existence in 119, if, as there is some reason to think, a final addition was at that time made to it. The addition

referred to is the story of the Magi: "A Syriac writing ascribed to Eusebius of Cæsarea, . . . makes the statement, which can hardly have been invented, that this narrative [the story of the Magi], committed to writing in the interior of Persia, was, in A. D. 119, during the episcopate of Xystus of Rome, made search for, discovered, and written in the language of those interested in it (that is to say, in Greek)." (Schmiedel) According to these two data the completion of this gospel cannot vary more than twenty-five years either way from A. D. 95. There certainly is small ground on which to base any more definite statement.

The many close agreements between all three of these records make the conclusion irresistible that one of them must have been used in the composition of the other two. If, with most of the recent critics, we take Luke for the youngest, it remains only to settle the priority between Matthew and Mark. This, however, is not so simple as it sounds. There is no external evidence, no historical testimony, bearing on the subject; we are left wholly to indications in the gospels themselves. From these indications the best critics have with practical unanimity adjudged the priority to Mark, and probably many an unlearned reader has independently reached the same conclusion,

as some of the grounds of it are very obvious. To begin with, Mark is much the shortest of the gospels. Now, it is far more natural that the writer of Matthew should extend Mark's narrative than that Mark, having Matthew's work before him and using large portions of it, should deliberately omit other large portions \* Considering the quality of much that he would thus omit, it is simply inconceivable that he would do it. Matthew is much given to quoting prophecies and alleging fulfillment of prophecies, a habit that belongs especially to the later writers. Mark himself quotes no prophecies, the sole instance where he appears to do so (1 : 2, 3) being an interpolation. Mark relates numerous miraculous incidents, but he makes scarcely a single addition to the miracle-stories found in the other evangelists; the others all have special marvels of their own to tell. Genuine Mark, ending with 16 . 8, has nothing of the miraculous conception, nothing of the childhood of Jesus, nothing of his re-appearance after death. These are features which point decidedly to the more primitive character of this gospel. Another evidence of its having preceded the other three is its being written in a much less finished

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\* The converse argument does not hold. Matthew omits little of Mark, and omits that little usually for reason,—because of its bluntness or its crudeness, or on account of doctrinal implications.

style. The Greek is pronounced "rude." A competent critic calling attention to some of the language says, "Such words might naturally find their place in the dialect of the slaves and freedmen who formed the first congregations of the church in Rome." Hardly would one with no more literary faculty, with Matthew already in hand, have undertaken to produce another gospel; to have the motive for such a work he must have preceded Matthew.

One other point is not less conclusive, and that is what has been called the "candor" of Mark. He says things bluntly and plainly, with little thought of what the effect will be. Thus, he speaks of the limitation of Jesus' power, tells how, when he came into his own country, "he could not do any miracle there, except that he laid his hand on a few sick persons" (6: 5); in another place (3: 20, 21) he gives currency to the story that the relatives of Jesus thought he was crazy, after, in the same chapter (3: 11), making the first declaration that Jesus is the Messiah come from the mouth of a demoniac. These are features carefully brushed aside by the succeeding evangelists as derogatory to the Master, "stumbling-blocks" to believers; and surely they are features which no writer having Matthew's narrative before him would have added.

These and other considerations which will occur to the careful reader leave no room to doubt that of the four gospels in our possession Mark's is decidedly the most primitive.

Having come to this conclusion we may legitimately suppose that some additions were made to Mark from the other gospels after they came to be written. That the resurrection-story at the close is such an addition we have positive evidence in the fact that it is not found there in the oldest Greek manuscripts. Very likely there are other insertions, for which we have not this kind of evidence. At least we may fairly suppose that original Mark did not contain, involved with the parusia to follow, the apocalyptic of the destruction of Jerusalem (13: 9-27), which would point to a date later than 70. Taking these and a few of the more incredible miracle-stories—such as the walking on the sea, and the feeding of thousands of people on next to nothing, with more food left over than there was to begin with—as accretions of the last quarter of the century, there is no great difficulty in making out a more original Mark which may have dated as early as 50. This book began, as does our Mark, with the baptism of Jesus, knowing nothing of him up to that hour. As foundation for the story of the Temptation, so elaborately developed by Mat-

thew, Mark has the one verse (Mark 1:13): "In the wilderness forty days tempted by Satan, he was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered unto him,"—an obvious myth. Then begin the preaching and the teaching, brief reports of conversations, parables, and discourses, copied from earlier records,—in some cases, perhaps, taken from the lips of actual auditors,—utterances which form the real core of the gospel. Interspersed with these essentials is curious legendary matter, which began early to gather about the name of Jesus,—some fifteen miraculous incidents, mostly relating to the cure of one and another physical ailment. Jesus receives some indefinite exaltation, is indicated as the Messiah, but is directly called the Christ in good faith only once (8:29). He is freely spoken of as limited in power (6:5); as limited in knowledge (13:32); as being suspected of mental aberration (3:21). We are here at an early stage in the development of Christology. No such language could be used at the end of the century. Matthew retains the limitation of knowledge (24:36), but Luke will have none of it. Especially notable is the absence in our earliest gospel of the whole cycle of resurrection-legends, the narrative ending with the simple statement that the two women who visited the spot very early Sunday morning found

the stone rolled away from the opening of the tomb, and that they were told by "a young man" sitting there that Jesus, whom they sought, had risen. Nobody sees the risen Christ or has any intercourse with him.

Starting from this most primitive gospel of which we have positive knowledge, contained in our present Mark (or partially contained there, as there may have been excisions as well as additions), we come, through a series of modifications which may have gone on for a hundred years, to the gospel as it now stands. In the meantime other gospels were written, and first (among those that survive) the one which bears the name of Matthew. The name has given ready currency to a statement of Papias implying that the substance of this book was written by Matthew, in Hebrew, by which we must understand Aramaic if anything, for already at the Christian era Hebrew was a dead language not in the command of unlearned men like the apostles. It is unlikely indeed that any one of the apostles ever made a formal writing in any language. The most that can be admitted is that some memoranda were left by Matthew, forming some slight basis for the gospel called after him. But there were certainly other helps, not the least of which was original Mark. Some of these sources were surely such

as had not been available to Mark, amply justifying the production of another and more comprehensive statement.

The writer reflects the Jewish-Christian attitude of the closing years of the first century. Jerusalem has been destroyed, and the Jewish State has practically gone out of existence; the Messianic prophecies have no more chance of fulfillment, therefore they must already have been fulfilled, and Jesus was the fulfillment. The writer is thoroughly possessed by this idea, and some of the incidents of his opening chapters are only too apparently created "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." Because Messiah, the Prince, was to be of royal blood, he constructs a genealogy according to which Jesus descended in direct line from king David,\*—a genealogy on the paternal side, recognizing Joseph as the father of Jesus, and rendered absolutely null and void by the later addition to this very gospel (1:18-25) of the myth of the miraculous conception.

By good fortune this author had acquired a collec-

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\* This is the more peculiar, as Jesus in all three of these gospels is reported as adverse to the notion that the Christ must come of the line of David. See on this point Matt. 22:41-45, Mark 12:35-37, Luke 20:41-44.

tion of remarkable excerpts from the discourses of Jesus, the insertion of which in the form of a sermon on a mountain puts the world under everlasting obligations to him. The freedom of Jesus in these utterances from the dogmas which in the two or three intervening generations had grown up concerning him, is a striking seal of their genuineness, warranting their acceptance along with a few great parables as an authentic compend of his teaching. Less can be said for another considerable addition to what we are told in the older gospel,—the so-called charge to the twelve apostles. This charge (chap 10) is expanded to great length from ten lines in Mark. It may contain reminiscences of what Jesus said at some time, but that it was uttered as reported may well be doubted. The beginning of it, "Go not away to the gentiles," is what in Jesus' lifetime there could have been no occasion to say, and reflects the situation at a later period, as well as an anti-Pauline tendency in the writer. The concluding paragraphs have a truer ring.

The 11th chapter comes wholly from another source than Mark. It reports a visit to Jesus from disciples of John, with the discourse which followed that visit. It may in the main be accepted, though it shows the effect of its passage through the years, giving us here

and there views which belong to the end of the century. We can hardly think of Jesus, after repeatedly charging the disciples not to publish a marvel, saying to his visitors in evidence of his Messiahship : "The blind receive sight, . . . lepers are cleansed, . . . the dead are raised" The Jesus of Mark could not say : "All things have been delivered unto me by my Father; . . . no one knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom it is the will of the Son to reveal him." Here we are well down into second-century ideas.

In the next chapter, which is a disconnected assemblage of incidents and sayings drawn from various sources, the deviations from Mark show again the conceptions of the later time. The habit of Mark had been, in telling of miraculous cures, to cite the individual instances. Later thought called for more sweeping statements ; so the author of Matthew relates how, when Jesus withdrew from a certain place to escape the machinations of the Pharisees and was followed by many sick persons, "he healed them *all*", and, with characteristic inconsequence in his citation of scripture, calls this unostentatious healing fulfillment of a prophecy of Isaiah in which not a word is said about healing (12:14-21). We have also here an obviously late and unauthentic tradition of "the

sign of Jonas,"—his confinement *in ventre balæne* typifying "the Son of man's three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"\*\* This could only come out of a time long subsequent to the death of Jesus. Nor is it like him to be boasting of superiority to Jonah and Solomon. But the chapter closes with one of the most effective pictures in the New Testament — "'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' And stretching forth his hand toward his disciples, he said, 'Behold my mother and my brothers! For whoever doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.'" So fine, so tender a touch leaves no doubt of its genuineness, and again we are grateful to this writer.

Chapter 13 is made up of parables and their explanation, most of the matter being found in Mark. There are, however, a few additions, the most striking of which is the parable of the tares, which with its explanation is under strong suspicion of late origin. Baur long ago saw in it a veiled reference to Paul, who was bringing into the wheat-field of the kingdom the hated tares of heathendom. The final disposition

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\* This is in direct contradiction of Mark 8 12, where, in response to the demand for a sign, Jesus distinctly says, "No sign will be given."

## *The Synoptic Gospels*

of the “tares” is at any rate more in the spirit of Jewish sectaries than of Jesus

The story that Mark tells of the feeding of five thousand on seven loaves had by the time of writing of Matthew acquired a prelude. The multitudes are said to have brought with them “those who were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others. These were laid at the feet of Jesus, “and he healed them” (15 : 30). The four thousand fed in this story, as well as the five thousand in what appears to be double, are swollen by the addition of “besides women and children.”

The direction (18 : 15–17) how to proceed with a erring church-member does not at all suit the conditions when as yet there was no church organization, although it is a recognized indication of the comparative lateness of this gospel. Not to dwell on minor points, this chapter concludes with an important parable, found only in Matthew alone. It is called out by Peter’s inquiry how many times he should forgive an offending brother, and brings in a public official who, after being forgiven by his king a very large shortage in his account, casts a fellow official into prison for inability to pay him a small debt. The lesson that, in view of the fact that God forgives us, we ought not to be slow in forgiving our debtors, is powerfully drawn, and one wonders whether

Luke, who took so much from Matthew, should not have taken this.

Modification and development of Mark continue on almost every page. The further considerable additions are: the woes pronounced on the scribes and Pharisees (chap. 23), the important chapter 25, and 28: 11–20. The “woes,” which are far from the spirit Jesus ordinarily manifested, can hardly be his in their present form; they may be taken as among the last accretions to this gospel. Very significant to the critic seeking to affix a date, is verse 35, where “Zechariah son of Barachiah” is said to have been slain “between the temple and the altar.” Commentators have hunted high and low, and in vain, for this son of Barachiah. The nearest approach to the name is Zechariah son of Berechiah, prophet of six hundred years before; but he suffered no martyrdom. According to Josephus, one Zechariah son of Baruch was “put to death in the middle of the temple” in A.D. 68. The natural inference is that this is the case referred to, and if so, Matthew could not have been written till long enough after 68 for the name to have become confused with another in the mind of the writer. This would give a date for the gospel accordant with what has here been said.

The enlargements upon Mark in the 25th chapter con-

sist of the parable of the Foolish and the Wise Virgins, the parable of the Talents, and, finally, the fairest of all the pictures of the parusia. This last, with its "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it to me," is full in the spirit of Jesus, but the whole picture of the coming of the Son of man in his glory must be taken as a development of the time subsequent to the writing of Mark. The last ten verses of Matthew show the growth of the resurrection-legend in that interval.

In this hurried survey we have seen how Matthew is an extension of the gospel story on the basis of Mark, the increments coming from sources, oral and written, which Mark did not possess, or did not see fit to use, the whole tinged with the doctrines of a later time. Turning now to Luke, we find the same process carried still further, resulting in a gospel based on both Mark and Matthew, with additions drawn from yet other sources — sources which seem to have been inaccessible to the other synoptists. With him, as with Matthew, there is the coloring of his own conceptions and the obvious setting of a later time.

As among the disciples the exaltation of Jesus grew from decade to decade, the silence of Mark about him up to the time of his baptism, together with the meagerness of Matthew's account of his origin, —

followed only by strange stories of the Magi, of the flight into Egypt, and the slaughter of the innocents,—weighed heavily on the hearts of Christians. To meet in some little measure a felt need, Luke at the outset, in two long chapters, greatly expands the story of the miraculous origin, bringing in the charming conceit of the shepherds and the choiring angels, the account of Simeon blessing the child, and of Anna the prophetess, and finally provides, in an incident of Jesus' boyhood, one resting-place for the feet of baffled Fancy in a viewless stretch of thirty years. But even so credible a story as that of the lad Jesus sitting with the teachers in the temple loses something of verisimilitude when mixed up with tales of Gabriel talking to Zachariah and to Mary, and of multitudinous angels singing to the shepherds.

Matthew had done a superfluous thing in carrying the genealogy of Jesus up to Abraham, as Davidic descent was the only point to be established. Furthermore, all Jews claim descent from Abraham. But Luke goes even farther yet, and traces the line all the way to Adam. He uses a different source, so we are not surprised at a complete disagreement from David down.\*

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\* The desperate resorts of commentators to harmonize the two aptly illustrate what is said on page 22

The first important contribution of Luke to the gospel literature is the account of Jesus dining by invitation at the house of Simon, a Pharisee (7 : 36-50). The incidents developed, the intrusion of a woman of ill-repute, her devotion, the displeasure of the host, with the ready parable and its application, make up an admirable lesson of forgiveness and its fruit of love. We get here a different idea of the Pharisees and of Jesus' relation to them from that insistently set forth in Matthew.

In another place (9 : 52-56), we have an indication of the spiritual quality of James and John, which is of critical interest. Jesus, with the twelve, on his way to Jerusalem, "sent messengers before him ; and they went and entered a city of the Samaritans to make ready for him. And they (the Samaritans) did not receive him, because his face was as if he were going to Jerusalem. And the disciples James and John, on seeing it, said : 'Lord, wilt thou have us bid fire come down from heaven and consume them ?'" This disposition of the two brothers accords better with the blunt statement of Mark (suppressed by the other evangelists) that Jesus called them "sons of thunder," than with the theory that one of them was the author of the most tenderly religious parts of the New Testament. But the main point is that only at a later

day than either Mark or Matthew could it be thought that the apostles were able at a word to bring down fire from heaven to consume whom they would. The same is to be said of the rejoicing of the seventy that "even the demons" were subject to them, and of the gift to them of "power to tread on serpents and scorpions" (10: 17-20).

An invaluable part of Luke's addition to the record is the parable of the Good Samaritan (10: 25-37). There is, in fact, hardly anything in the Bible that might not better be spared than this. Not only is it conceived in the pure spirit of brotherly love, it widens the brotherhood to extend beyond the Jewish pale. Following the parable is the pleasant picture, peculiar to Luke, of Jesus at Bethany with the family he loved so well.

Further material, of less significance, drawn from sources not in the hands of the other synoptists, includes the similitude of the importunate solicitor (11. 5-8); the parable, with its prelude, of the Rich Man, so prosperous that he had not where to store his crops (12: 13-21); remarks on the uncertain relation of suffering to sin, with the parable of the Unproductive Fig-tree, and a discussion with "the ruler of the synagogue" on the permissibility of doing good on the Sabbath (13: 1-17); some repetition of the dispute

over the vexed Sabbath question; advice to invited guests about taking places at table (14: 1-11). This last is an expansion of Matt 23: 12, and is manifestly a product of the time when Christian bishops were getting into society and scrambling for the places of honor at feasts. The pendant to this (vv. 12-14) is at least in the Christ-like spirit. Following, in illustration, is the parable of the Great Supper to which there were many invitations and no acceptances.

Matthew's parable of the Lost Sheep is supplemented here (15: 8-10) by that of the Ten Pieces of Silver, which adds nothing to the other, and only results, in the connection, in an anti-climax. But this may be overlooked in view of what follows, for here, and here only, we have the parable of the Prodigal Son. So Luke is to be credited with preserving to us, along with much else of high value, the two very greatest of Jesus' parables. The first, that of the Good Samaritan, may have been intentionally omitted by the writers of Matthew and Mark, who were more Jewish, on account of its universalistic implications; but that any gospel should be without the Prodigal Son, or that any source passing as "The Sayings of Jesus" should have been without it, is, to say the least, surprising.

Directly following is the parable of the Unjust

Steward, with its application,—a strange parable which seems to have more of Luke than of Jesus. Luke, who put a lower estimate on riches than did even Jesus himself, and who could praise generosity at the expense of justice, made the Gospel specially good tidings to the poor \* His animus toward rich and poor comes out strongly in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (16: 19–31), the tone of which, coupled with the fact that it depends on a single tradition, is against its being, in its present shape, from the lips of Jesus That the author should put it into the mouth of Jesus is no more remarkable than that he should make him say, just before (verse 16): “The Law and the Prophets were till John; from that time the glad tidings of the kingdom have been published, *and every one is forcing his way into it.*” Surely this does not represent the situation in Jesus’ lifetime; nor was any such attitude taken regarding the Law until long afterward Considerable portions of the 17th and 18th chapters, mostly of an inferior order, but including some memorable things, such as the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (18: 9–13) and the assurance to Peter of compensation for all sacrifices, are of Luke’s addi-

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\* See CONE, “Rich and Poor in the New Testament,” pp. 118–142

tion to the gospel; also the story of Zacchæus (19: 1-9), and, at the close, the post-resurrection story of two of the apostles having a long walk and talk with the risen Jesus on the way to Emmaus.

Although Luke does not contain everything that Matthew has, nor everything that Mark has, it will be seen that the new matter in this gospel — matter, that is, not met with in either of the others — considerably exceeds in bulk, if not in value, the additions Matthew before had made upon Mark. Luke's researches, we have reason to think, very nearly exhausted the genuine traditions, besides drawing heavily — in particular, for the beginning and end of the narrative — upon myth and legend.

It is hard to see how any unbiased student can compare these writings, observing how one depends upon another, without reaching the conclusion here set forth that the oldest is Mark, or rather a writing of which our Mark is a not very considerably modified recension; that this original Mark was one of the sources of Matthew, and then (either in its primitive or in its present modified form) together with Matthew served as a source for Luke, that both of these latter drew from other sources, Luke having one or more not in the possession of Matthew. This view, while not by any means elucidating the whole problem, will,

it is believed, go further towards it than any other that has been suggested. The order of the books in time, here contended for, further commends itself in that it accords with an obvious literary development in the writers. Mark, as the earliest, is, as we should expect, the rude, plain-spoken gospel, diffuse, unfinished, the work of a man not trained in cultured speech. Matthew, while given to an inept use of old prophecies, and not above criticism in some other respects, makes from a literary point of view a considerable advance, handling his matter with no little skill. Finally, in Luke we have the accomplished scribe, representing the culture that was coming into the Church in the second century. To him we owe the two books which, as works of art, rank first in the New Testament.

## CHAPTER XII.

### Acts of the Apostles.

Facts scanty, at time of the writing of Acts, concerning the doings of the apostles for the first decade after the crucifixion—"Unlearned and ignorant men"—Headship of Peter—Legendary character of much of the first half of the book—The affair of Cornelius—Peter opens the way for gentiles to come into the Church—Conflict of this account with Galatians—Jewish Christians oppose Peter's liberal action—Paul to the front—His missionary tours—Rough experiences—Writer has more authentic data of Paul than of Peter—Council of Jerusalem—Question of admitting gentiles to fellowship formally settled as far as the leaders are concerned—The "we" sections of the narrative greatly strengthen its credibility—Paul's reality too intense to be lost in the legends clustering about him—His fierce contention with the Jerusalem apostles a myth woven in the after time.

**C**ONSIDERATION of the Acts of the Apostles follows naturally after that of the synoptics, as the book purports to come from the hand of the author of the Third Gospel and continues the record from the point where that work concludes. It is the sole narrative left us of the doings of the Church for the first thirty-five years of its existence; the only other writings bearing even incidentally and scantily upon the same period and the same events being the

epistles attributed to Paul It is to be presumed therefore that when the author set himself to this work, which was some time subsequent to the writing of his gospel, that is to say, well down into the second century, authentic sources of information concerning the earlier period were limited in the extreme. That such should have been the case more especially as to the years immediately following the death of Jesus is what under the circumstances must be deemed inevitable All thought was then turned on the great, the unique personality that had come and gone. What writings were made were reminiscences of the sayings and doings of the Master; nothing after him seemed worth recording. The men who, as apostles, took up the leadership were pygmies in comparison, and, we may be sure, did little enough which to their contemporaries appeared to be history-making material Only after they were dead did they grow into any great importance. Even tradition, aided by legend in a time when legends grew apace, could make nothing notable of more than four; and the fame of these four can hardly be made to rest on anything they ever said There is not a line in existence that can be confidently traced to the hand of any one of them. That they were all good men, who did faithful service in disseminating a knowledge of Jesus, there is abundant reason

to believe ; that three of them had more distinguishing qualities seems to be indicated. At any rate, when Acts came to be written, three, and apparently only three, were more than names ; and of the leading two of these, Peter and John, it is there said, "they were unlearned and ignorant men" (4 : 13).

The writer, in default, it would seem, of documents concerning the Church of the first ten or fifteen years after the death of Jesus, depended largely on oral tradition, which in the later time had rapidly developed. The tendency had been to raise Peter into a kind of successor to Jesus as head of the Church, and, as it was impossible to clothe him with Jesus' mental and spiritual endowments, tradition did what it could in making him a worker of marvels who went about curing all manner of sicknesses and even raising the dead. Every power in this direction which had been attributed to the Master was passed over to this disciple. This is in strong contrast with what we are told in the gospels of his gifts ; however, that we are not to look for consistency in the statements of a narrator who depends upon hearsay for his facts goes without saying. From this point of view it is no matter for surprise that the same writer who in his gospel represents the ascension as supervening very shortly upon the resurrection,—within twenty-four hours,—inter-

poses in this next "treatise," which overlaps the first to pick up the thread, an interval of forty days between the two events. So much the tradition, or perhaps we should say his knowledge of the tradition, had expanded between the completion of the first writing and the taking up of the second.

Opening with the statement that for forty days after the resurrection Jesus was in communication with the disciples, giving them full directions about their work, the writer paints the final scene when, after Jesus "had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." Following, we have a list of the eleven remaining apostles, gathered for conference in their "upper room" in Jerusalem,—although Matthew has it that they had all fled to Galilee,—of eight (if not of nine) of whom no further mention is made in the whole course of a book bearing the title, "Acts of the Apostles."\* This would seem to imply that, in the judgment of a second-century writer, there were in the original band only two or three men of note. Peter is acknowledged leader, and at an early meeting of the

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\* The Philip repeatedly mentioned is not the apostle of that name, but Philip the evangelist. Even the list (1·13), which agrees with Luke 6·16 in including Judas the son of James, departs from that of Mark and Matthew, who have Thaddæus instead.

brethren he reviews the crime of Judas and arranges for the choice of an apostle in his place. Into this speech the writer injects parenthetically an account of the death of Judas which cannot be harmonized with that in Matt. 27 : 5 (Acts 1 : 18). Again, on the day of Pentecost, after the marvelous "speaking with other tongues," Peter makes the only speech thought worth recording,—a speech charged with the later Pauline doctrine of the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" by which even a crime like the crucifixion is brought about! As a result of this effort, we are told, three thousand souls were added to the Church, which a few days before seems to have consisted of "about one hundred and twenty" persons. In the next chapter Peter, after healing a man crippled from his birth and unable to move, delivers another discourse, which swells the number of *men alone* converted to five thousand. Evidently we are in the full tide of legend here. The legendary strain continues with more or less prominence straight on through the book, coming out strong in the account of Ananias and Sapphira smitten dead for withholding from the apostles a part of the proceeds arising from the sale of their possessions; in the report of further multitudes of converts "both of men and women, so that in the streets they brought out the sick and laid them

on beds and couches, in order that at least the shadow of Peter as he passed might overshadow some of them"; in the assertion that "the multitude also belonging to the cities around came together to Jerusalem bringing the sick and those plagued by unclean spirits, and they were all healed"; and in the typically mythical representation that when, on account of all this, Peter and John were seized by the authorities and put in prison, "an angel of the Lord in the night opened the prison-doors and brought them forth" (5: 1-20). The haze of unreality is so thick over all the first part of the book that little can be made out with distinctness. We are more than suspicious that the speeches put into the mouths of the principal characters, Peter and Stephen, are Luke's rather than theirs; that his data for what he is telling us must be exceedingly slight; that what he weaves is largely a web of fancy. Only after we get over the first ten chapters, dealing with the first decade of the Church,—the period concerning which authentic information would naturally be the scantiest and the growth of legend the rankest,—do we feel the ground becoming more solid under our feet. We are then at the point when, according to this writer, the question first came up whether persons other than Jews could be received into the Church without, as an antecedent

qualification, becoming Jews by submission to the Mosaic Law. A Roman centurion, Cornelius by name, having, through experiences which in Luke's source must have undergone a mythical transformation, become interested in the new teaching, wished to be received into the fellowship as a disciple of Jesus. Peter's reflections over the problem had also, in the source, been mythically transformed into the seeing of a vision and the hearing of a voice, which settled the matter to his satisfaction, so that he went, by more or less miraculous leading, from Joppa to Cæsarea, where Cornelius was in garrison. The officer had gathered together his kinsmen and near friends, all presumably Romans, as he was expecting Peter and the brethren who came with him. In the conference that ensued Peter said to the little assembly. "Ye know that it is an unlawful thing for a Jew to keep company with one of another nation, or to come near him; but God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean." Cornelius then related his experience, whereupon Peter exclaimed: "Of a truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him." That, with the rest of the speech, is rather high thinking and rather fine speaking for an "unlearned and ignorant man," and we may

well believe that the utterance has not lost in force or elegance in passing through this writer's hands. But the unlearned and the ignorant are sometimes superior to prejudice, and such a one might be as likely as another to take this great initiative. At this point, and in the rest of the narrative where it bears upon the attitude of Peter on this question and on the relations between him and Paul, the author of Acts is so categorically contradicted in certain epistles attributed to Paul that we must reject either the historicity of Acts in this matter or the genuineness of these epistles. Now, it happens that the epistles in which the war of Paul upon the other apostles and their war upon him come out are the very ones whose genuineness has been most confidently asserted, being of the famous four left of the fourteen by the Tübingen critics as of unassailable authenticity. On the other hand, the book of Acts is handicapped in the case by the fact that its narrative is, at some other points, so obviously unhistorical. Nevertheless, the present trend of opinion is in favor of Luke's representations and against that of the epistles. The problem will more naturally come up for consideration in dealing with the Pauline Literature.

It is very apparent that from the beginning of the 11th chapter the writer of Acts has better sources of

information. He tells us that news of the incident at Cæsarea, how a Roman centurion with his kinsmen and friends had been baptized, reached Jerusalem, and that Peter on his return there had to defend his action, which he did on the strength of the revelation made to him, with the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in approval of his course. For the moment, the matter rested. It is unnecessary to suppose that a single incident of this kind must inaugurate a sweeping change of policy in the Church ; that Peter would be constrained to go at once into the world beyond Judea with his gospel. It is more natural that he should "hasten slowly" in this matter, and do as he is represented to have done. The prejudice of Jewish Christians against gentiles was not to be once for all brushed aside by an apostle's vision ; but a certain liberty was given, to those so disposed, to carry the Gospel beyond Jewish circles. The first persecution of the Church, about the year 33, in which Stephen was the chief victim, dispersed some of the propagandists beyond the bounds of Judea, and a few of these ventured preaching to the Greeks, and with good success. This too was reported to the Jerusalem church, which, not yet wholly persuaded by Peter's revelation, sent a messenger to Antioch to look into the proceeding. This messenger was no other than Barnabas, an im-

portant figure in the primitive Church, the one who befriended Paul on his conversion and brought him into fellowship with the apostles. The work at Antioch met with his entire approval, and, pushing on to Tarsus, he found Paul and brought him to Antioch, where they labored together for a whole year. At this time and in this place the disciples, it is said, were first called Christians.

The two heroes of Acts are Peter and Paul, and as Paul, at the point where we are now arrived, is about to loom up into overshadowing importance, the writer, after noting the execution of James the brother of John, first apostolic martyr, inserts here the last of his stock of legends about Peter (12: 3-23), who, in dropping out of the leading rôle, is thus covered with a kind of valedictory glory. Herod Agrippa I, having disposed of James, had Peter cast into prison, where, bound with two chains, he slept between two soldiers, with keepers guarding the door. In the middle of the night an angel of the Lord aroused him and led him forth past the guards. When they came to the iron gate of egress from the prison, it opened of itself, and Peter was free. It is sad to read that the innocent guards paid with their lives for what they were withheld from perceiving and could not help. But it was a great escape for the apostle, who could not ask for

more honorable retirement from his place of distinction in what Renan aptly called "the Odyssey of the New Testament."

The account of the commissioning of Barnabas and Paul for a special work, and of what immediately followed (13: 1-12), is drawn from a source which put Barnabas first and took him for the principal person. The two set out on a missionary journey, preaching in the synagogues as they went from place to place. Paul proved the more forceful speaker and the more determined character, on account of which he is shortly recognized in the narrative as leader. As might be supposed, this preaching of Christ in the synagogues, although, according to this narrative, long tolerated, met here and there with loud protest. On the island of Cyprus, whither they sailed in the first place, traveling through from east to west, they appear to have met with no other opposition than that of a Jewish sorcerer, named Barjesus, with whom they had a contest for the soul of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of the island, in which contest Paul begins to show himself a worker of wonders comparable to Peter. He inflicts a blindness on the sorcerer for his presumptuous trickery, and so wins the proconsul over to the new faith. This story, from whatever source derived, appears to have been confused and corrupted.

before it came into the hands of Luke, the actual blindness of Barjesus being probably a mental one, of which Paul, instead of inflicting it on him, convicted him. This were better ground for the conversion of the proconsul. But not unwelcome to the writer was any story which gave to Paul miraculous gifts and so helped to establish a parallelism between him and the Peter already set forth.

From Paphos in Cyprus, Paul and his company, which at this time included Mark (also called John), crossed the gulf to the mainland north, where in the south part of Asia Minor were the populous cities he purposed to visit. Wherever he went he first found and used the synagogue, and if he was driven out, he made that a ground for turning to the gentiles. This happened at Antioch of Pisidia. From Iconium they were compelled to flee, through a plot of both Jews and gentiles to destroy them ; but at Lystra the action of Paul, who paused in the midst of his sermon to "heal" a man impotent in both feet and who never had walked, raised such a wave of enthusiasm that the missionaries were embarrassed by the reverence shown them (13 : 13 – 14 : 18). But this enthusiasm, which — so runs the strange story — went to the length of proposing to sacrifice to them as to gods, was so fickle that when some Jews came over from places where the

missionaries had previously been, and got the ears of the people, the whole town turned against them, "stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him dead." Nevertheless, in the presence of the disciples, he revived, and the next day they left that place, on which a great miracle seemed to have been wasted. Nothing daunted, however, the indomitable Paul, after visiting Derbe, returned to Lystra. The evil memory of the place was ever softened to him by the fact that out of it came the faithful Timothy. After a few further stops the party returned to Antioch whence they had set out about a year before

At this point, the very middle of the book, it is obvious that the writer's sources again and decidedly change their character, becoming greatly more authentic. Beginning with the 15th chapter one gets an unmistakable sense of reading history. Here we have it that, as might be expected, some of the stricter sort of the brethren came down to Antioch from Jerusalem, declaring that non-Jewish converts must comply with the Jewish ritual Law. This was now a burning question, as Paul had laid no such requirement on his converts. It is idle to say that Peter's course with Cornelius (if an actual occurrence), and his grounds for it, ought to have settled the question. Questions

involving immemorial racial customs are not settled adversely to those customs in a day, not even by an apostle's vision, not if the apostle were clothed with ten times Peter's authority. Paul and Barnabas "had no small dissension and questionings," we are told, with the brethren from Jerusalem, and it was decided to carry the matter before a Council to be held in that city.

At that Council, Paul and his associates set forth the case as it appeared to them, and when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up and said. "Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you that by my mouth the gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel and believe. And God, who knoweth the heart, bore them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, as he gave it to us; and made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

To this James the brother of Jesus gave his assent, adding: "My judgment is that we should not trouble those who from among the gentiles are turning to God; but that we should write to them by letter to abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication,

and from that which hath been strangled, and from blood" (15 : 6-20)

This course was adopted, says the writer of Acts, and was satisfactory to Paul and his party. There was peace in the Church over the matter, at least as far as the leaders were concerned, though there continued to be need of some tact in meeting the prejudices of the Jewish-Christian laity. Thus when, nine years later, Paul visited Jerusalem, while the apostles and elders were indifferent as to his non-observance of the ritual, they approached him in these terms: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them that have believed; and they are all zealous for the Law; and they have been informed concerning thee." Therefore the elders advised him that in Jerusalem he observe the customs of the place, which he consented to do.

Acts, from the 15th chapter on to the end, is devoted to the further journeyings and labors of Paul, for whom the writer shows a regard and a reverence quite as great as were before shown for Peter. In planning for the second journey, Barnabas wished to take along John Mark who had started with them on the previous tour; but Paul objected strenuously to a man that had set his hand to the plough and then turned back. The contention was so sharp that

Barnabas himself withdrew. Paul took with him Silas, and at Lystra picked up Timothy. It needs to bear these two in mind, as one of them appears to be authority for much in the narrative that follows.

Scattered through these chapters, commencing with 16: 10, are four passages of varied and not always precisely determinable length in which the narrator speaks in the first person, implying that he was one of the party. The old view was that by "we" is meant the author of *Acts* himself, and that he was among those who accompanied Paul.\* But that is untenable, as, if he spoke of his own knowledge, he would use the first person constantly. Besides, Luke is not once mentioned in *Acts*, and for the sufficient reason that he was probably not yet born in the time of which he furnishes this account † There can be no doubt that the "we" sections were taken direct from one of the fresh sources which so strengthen the author's

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\* This fancy rests on the mention of a certain Luke in II Tim. 4. 11, and more specifically in Col 4 14 as "the beloved physician" Assuming these epistles to be from the hand of Paul, and assuming the Luke mentioned to be the author of *Acts*, we might suppose him to speak in *Acts* of things which largely transpired under his own observation But the epistles are assuredly work of the second century, and the Luke mentioned in them, if the author of gospel and of *Acts*, could not have been a contemporary of Paul.

† Let it be understood that by "Luke" is here and throughout meant the writer of *Acts* and the Third Gospel; his real name we do not know.

narrative from the beginning of the 15th chapter. And these sections, in the source from which they were taken, must have been written by one of Paul's party. That the writing was not by Paul himself is implied by the expression "Paul and us," which occurs (16:17)\*; though it may have been done under his supervision. The circumstances point strongly to Silas or Timothy as the writer of this source. As neither of these accompanied Paul on his way to Rome, the long passage concerning that voyage, written in the first person (27:1-28:15), is probably from a journal or memorandum made by Aristarchus, who was of the company, or is possibly from the hand of Paul himself. These sections, therefore, have a special certitude, and are to be implicitly accepted, in the judgment even of those who make *Acts* yield to the epistles at all points of conflict. In the first place they are comparatively free from the marvelous, containing nothing essentially incredible; Paul's cure of the sick on the island of Melita (Malta) being explicable in such ways as we may see fit to explain similar incidents so commonly reported in modern days. All the rest that this eye-witness tells is as natural as the day, and fully accords with the sound

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\* See also 20 13, 14, 21 12.

observation that *the biggest stories are told by persons who were not there.*

But the compiler had other sources for his account of Paul which were not written by eye-witnesses, sources full of marvel; and it belonged to his plan not to let Paul fall below Peter in any respect. So we are told that when Paul and Silas had been seized, beaten, and cast into prison at Philippi in Macedonia, "suddenly there was a great earthquake; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." At Ephesus, where he remained two years, "God wrought," runs the narrative, "special miracles by the hands of Paul; insomuch that even handkerchiefs or aprons were carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out" However, the writer's trustworthy data in regard to Paul are much more extensive than what he had concerning Peter, and he has less need to fill out his narrative with stories of this kind. Largely delivered from the enslavement to legend so apparent in the earlier part of his work, he proceeds to outline the main features of a great career, bringing to the task a literary skill not found elsewhere in the New Testament; a love for his hero which is infectious, seen in many a touch of tenderness; and a devotion to the Christian cause akin to

that of Paul himself. The great narrative is not to be epitomized, it is to be pored over and wept over, to be prized as one of the rarest treasures of antiquity, preserving the memory of a mighty soul and furnishing a glimpse of the real man, the true disciple of Jesus behind all the dogmatics and strange philosophy that grew up about his name. Nowhere in the epistles is the heart of Paul revealed as in the account of his farewell to the elders of the church at Ephesus. Having called the elders together he said to them :

“ Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility, and with tears, and trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews ; how I kept back nothing that was profitable, but have made it known to you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house ; testifying to both Jews and Greeks repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus.

“ And now, behold, I go, bound in my spirit, to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will befall me there ; save that the Holy Spirit witnesseth to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I count life of no value to me, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the glad tidings of the grace of God.

“ And now, behold, I know that ye all among whom I went about preaching the kingdom will see my face no more. Wherefore I testify to you this day that I am pure from the blood of all men ; for I have not

shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit made you overseers, to feed the church of the Lord, which he purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departure grievous wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And from among yourselves will men arise speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be watchful, and remember that for the space of three years, night and day, I ceased not to warn every one with tears.

"And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, who is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all the sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those that were with me In all ways I showed you that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'"

And having thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. And they all wept sorely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him; sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they were to see his face no more And they accompanied him to the ship.

In all the fourteen epistles attributed to Paul there is not so important a quotation from the words of Jesus as the one incorporated in the above address, nor is there anywhere in them so clear a manifestation of Jesus' spirit Is it to be believed that the man who preserved to us this beautiful and tender

picture of Paul did, with the epistles to the Galatians and to the Corinthians before him, deliberately contradict the statements of Paul, give to Peter the credit that belonged to Paul of first opening the door of the Church to gentiles, and grossly misrepresent the relations subsisting between Paul and the Jerusalem apostles? The theory has been long prevalent that there was a bitter contention in the Church about the middle of the first century, as shown in the first chapters of Galatians; that, after two or three generations, this contention being a thing of the past, the writer of Acts, with a view to remove the scandal of an apparent quarrel between apostles, undertook to give another representation of the case, to show that, while there was a real struggle, it was carried on in a Christ-like spirit and settled by mutual concessions; but the real truth of the case has been supposed to lie in the epistle. This has been to put the author of Acts and of the Third Gospel in a decidedly unfavorable light, as more or less of a dissembler. There is a disposition now to rescue him from this imputation, and to do it with no detriment to the good name of Paul.

It is a notable fact that in the whole of Acts, more than half of which is devoted to the career of Paul, with obvious sympathy in his aims and admiration of

his achievements, there is no slightest reference to him as an author, no word of the elaborate treatises, entitled epistles, making up in volume three-tenths of the New Testament, which he is commonly supposed to have written in these very years, and which, if really his, could not but be regarded as among the important acts of the apostle. How could such an omission be made by a writer who had his eyes so open to the literary world that, in sitting down to the preparation of what he calls his "former treatise," he could not refrain from referring to the numerous books already extant on the same subject? Here is a problem that calls loudly for elucidation, and to it we must next address ourselves.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### The Pauline Literature.

Bulk of the material — Not mentioned in Acts — Contrast with Gospel teaching — Difficulty of supposing that it could come out of the first quarter of a century after the preaching of Jesus — Reduction of its bulk as a means of reducing the difficulty — Puzzle remains so long as any of the epistles are credited to Paul — Doctrine that of a later time — References to Paul such as no sensible person makes of himself — Realistic personal allusions not beyond the power of invention — Writings not Paul's — Work of a group in first half of second century — The real Paul — Value of the epistles — Cast historical light on Church of second century — Corinthians — Romans — Philippians — Galatians — Paulinism.

THE word literature is here employed to cover the canonical writings at one time and another attributed to Paul, because some of them are in the nature of regular disquisitions, too extended and discursive to be called epistles or letters. Indeed it is the *bulk* of this material that first strikes the casual reader, amounting as it does — including the little epistles of James and Peter which are discussions of Paulinism — to one-third of the New Testament. The reader is greatly surprised at this if he has already noted that in Acts no mention is made of *anything*

having been written by Paul. As he dips into the substance of these epistles his surprise increases, for he finds them dealing with knotty and obscure matters, with "unknown tongues," with meats offered to idols, with resurrection and predestination, with the authority of Jewish Law, and numerous other intricate problems, all in strange contrast with the sweet simplicity of Jesus in the synoptic gospels. The mystified reader turns to the conventional authorities, and is there told that Paul wrote his epistles, all thirteen of them (or fourteen, if Hebrews is his), between A. D. 52 and 62; that is to say, from twenty to thirty years after the crucifixion, while the words of Jesus were still ringing in the ears of thousands of people. More than ever puzzled, the reader, pricked to earnest inquiry, goes back to the epistles and laboriously reads them through, a task to which he must give quite a little time, for he finds them full of hard thinking, curious philosophizing, noble ethics, noble piety, with a great emphasis on the official functions of the Christ in working out the redemption of the world, but making hardly a reference to any event in the life of Jesus, scarcely ever quoting a word from him. And this, if the popular notion of their date is correct, at a time when the air was full of his words, when loving disciples were passing them from mouth to mouth,

carefully writing them down, gathering them from far and near as more precious than gold, and wearing them next their heart! How clashes upon the voice of the Nazarene this arid discussion of the relative advantages of Jew and gentile, justification by faith or justification by works, election and reprobation, atonement once for all doing away with the Law! The inquirer wonders if these doctrinal epistles represent the preaching of Paul, and, turning again to Acts, finds that the apostle's preaching was of "the things concerning Jesus"; that at Ephesus this was so well understood that strolling exorcists adopted this form of conjuration: "I adjure you by that Jesus whom Paul preacheth"; that in the synagogue at Thessalonica he summed up all in the words, "Jesus whom I am making known to you." Evidently, thinks the inquirer, he must have said much of the life of Jesus, repeated many of his words. How then could he, how could any Christian leader, in those years have written these epistles?

This is a question which in one form or another has presented itself to thousands upon thousands of readers, and vain are all the efforts of scholars from Tertullian down to answer it. It is one of the questions that never can be answered, for it asks an explanation of the impossible. Critical inquiry until re-

cently has not squarely faced the problem, but has sought to reduce its gravity by a process of elision, throwing out much of this material and crediting only the remainder to Paul. The process naturally began with Hebrews, as that writing does not claim to be his, and tradition is not unanimous in ascribing it to him. Its apostolic authorship was definitely denied in the 16th century, and Luther and Calvin acquiesced in the verdict, as have later scholars generally. Before the close of the 18th century doubts were raised as to the "genuineness" of Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, I. and II. Thessalonians; early in the 19th century as to Timothy and Titus. The doubters were the foremost Christian scholars of the period, including Semler, Schleiermacher, de Wette. The process was carried far by the Tübingen school of critics, who, under the lead of C F von Baur, reduced the number of epistles actually written by Paul to four: Romans, I. and II. Corinthians, and Galatians. Here the method of exclusion seemed to have reached its climax, and for half a century could no further go, indeed a feeling arose that it had gone too far, there was an obvious retrogression, and the stamp of "genuineness" was restored to this and that epistle, raising the number to six, seven, eight, nine, ten, according to the inclinations of the investigator.

In all this the real difficulty to the thoughtful reader of the New Testament was not touched. That difficulty lies in conceiving how such a ponderous document as Romans — to cite only one of these treatises — could have appeared, filled to overflowing with discussion of problems which are never once raised in the gospels, in the very years when original Mark was taking shape, when that and every other Christian writing which we can imagine as coming into existence dealt, we may be sure, exclusively in recollections of Jesus, — venturing not at all into speculations on the origin of sin and the quality of grace, into contrasts of Christ with Adam, of the law of faith with the law of righteousness, — raising none of the subtle questions which in the second century came to occupy the minds of Christians. This difficulty was not in the least removed by the criticism which postponed for half a century or so the writing of ten of the fourteen epistles ; the full force of it remains so long as a single one in the list stands unquestioned. The basis of criticism has been wrong in so far as it has taken profundity of thought, well-developed conceptions, sublime assaults on the old Judaism, sound statement of doctrine according to modern standards, as evidence of the hand of Paul. It is precisely the advanced thought of these epistles which makes it impossible

to accept them as actual writings of his. Not but that he was a man of unusual powers, he was, we may well believe, the ablest man in the Church of his generation; but the time had not come for any such works as these. They are so far away from the synoptic gospels that, even with John and Acts intervening, the unpracticed reader falls down who attempts to step from them to Romans. Not that these epistles are spiritually above the gospels, but that they traverse another field, a field that could not have been entered by those who had been contemporaries of Jesus.

And, now that the question has been fairly propounded, how can it seem to a rational mind other than an historical inversion to take these high-wrought, philosophical, doctrinally-developed dissertations for the first Christian writings, utterances of the infant Church, made twenty, thirty, forty years before the first of our gospels saw the light? Are we to suppose that the writer of Mark, of even "original" Mark, when he set himself to the task of telling the story of Jesus, had before him these thirteen epistles? or the four principal ones? or even Romans? What could the poor Roman converts of the year 59, who had not seen the gospels, make of such a disquisition as that? What could any of us do with it as a primary lesson-book of religion? What would be thought of a

Sunday-school superintendent who should lay out a course of study for the children, commencing with this epistle? It would be of a piece with the unwisdom of beginning a course of mathematics with geometry or the calculus. Yet it is commonly supposed that this was the first book of instruction in the new religion put into the hands of the early Christians!

Not only are the doctrines which are set forth in the epistles greatly more developed than they could have been at the date supposed, even the phraseology points to a later time. Assuredly, the titles "Jesus Christ our Lord," "our Lord Jesus Christ," were never used by men who had been contemporaries of Jesus. Nor did he receive from any of them such appellations as "the Lord of glory," "Christ, our passover," "the last Adam," "God, blessed for ever." So, too, there is presupposed, in the four principal epistles, as in the rest, in those early, formative days, a thoroughly organized Church such as existed in the second century, with important congregations in Rome and in Corinth, wealthy, having a paid ministry (I Cor. 9:14), making contributions for distant objects (II Cor. 8:14 ff.) The church in Rome, which, if it existed in 59, must have been made up of the merest handful, is described as already "famous throughout the whole world," and Paul, who had never been there, is made to mention

twenty-seven persons of the membership with whom he is personally acquainted. Very skillful is the assumption of the character of Paul by the writers, but here and there in spite of themselves the artifice is betrayed, the fact glimmers through that Paul and his work were already things of the past. Occasionally the slip is made of having him speak in the past tense of his work, as of something finished, long gone by. It is a work "which Christ wrought through me"; "I laid the foundation, another buildeth thereon"; "I brought myself under bondage; to the Jews I became as a Jew; to the weak I became weak" The personal references to Paul are, many of them, such as no sensible person ever makes concerning himself, but just such as adoring friends and followers are likely to make: "I labored more abundantly than they all"; "I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." Both the Corinthians and the Philippians are earnestly enjoined. "Be ye imitators of me"; and to the Thessalonians he couples himself with the Lord as an example: "Ye became imitators of us and of the Lord." Whole pages of this self-laudation occur here and there which it is hard to see how any respecter of Paul can imagine coming from his hand.

A consideration which, with able critics, puts the

Pauline authorship of Romans out of the question is the fact that it contains an apparent reference to the destruction of Jerusalem as an event already past (11: 11-24). Now, Jerusalem fell in 70, six years after Paul suffered martyrdom. A person writing in the name of Paul could not commit the error of making him refer to this event, until time enough had elapsed, say forty or fifty years, to confuse the dates in his mind. The same is to be said of I. Thessalonians 2: 16, where there is a perfectly obvious reference to the destruction of Jerusalem. These writers, who may not have been born at the time of that awful tragedy, and who had not at hand books of chronology for guidance, got the mistaken impression that it preceded the death of Paul.

It will of course be urged, as it has been, that some of these epistles, notably Corinthians, contain so many personal allusions, and allusions so realistic, as to be beyond the power of invention. But to the power of invention it will not do to set any such limits. Too many stories have been so told as to pass for narrative of actual fact, to leave any force in such a sweeping statement. The consideration to be sure has its bearing, and is not to be ignored, but its weight is more than balanced by the insuperable difficulties in the way of admitting the authorship of Paul. How is it con-

ceivable, if the epistles preceded the gospels, that the gospels should not contain distinct traces of the doctrines of the epistles? How should it seem like passing into a new world as we go from these to those? If Paul made an anterior presentation of the Christian message, why is that message not repeated in the subsequent writings? Then, too, on that hypothesis there is, in the gospels, wholly inexplicable omission of statements of fact. For instance, we have, I. Corinthians 15. 6, the declaration that Jesus, after his death and burial, was seen by "above five hundred brethren at once" Now if, when Matthew was written, this epistle had been in circulation thirty or forty years, as it must have been if written by Paul, why should not Matthew and the other gospels contain that very important statement? Obviously the gospel writers had never heard of it, and for the good reason that it belongs to the latest stratum of tradition, and was not added till far into the second century.

The poverty of the few uncanonical Christian writings of the second century that have come down to us has often been remarked, the sad contrast they present to the canonical writings which just preceded them being held to show the falling off from inspired to uninspired literature. Really, what explains the

meagerness and inferiority of extra-canonical Christian literature in the first half of the second century is the fact that so much of the best writing of the time was carried back and credited to Paul ; the leavings were unavoidably poor. The Apostolic Fathers are made to look a feeble folk.

The new view disposes of the anomalous situation in which Paul has a clearer setting than Jesus himself, — in which he stands disclosed to the world in writings older than any gospel, and twice over more voluminous. It sets the New Testament characters in a more nearly just proportion.\*

What we have, then, in the thirteen epistles bearing the name of Paul, and in the four others of kindred substance, is the work of a group of writers — twenty or more of them there may have been, as some of the pieces bear the marks of more than one hand — who flourished from the close of the first to the middle of the second century ; men of rare gifts, all swayed by the wave of thought which, set in motion by Paul, was in those years swelling to ever greater dimensions — those writing in his name being his avowed followers

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\* A more extended presentation of the subject from the new point of view will be found in the works of Professor W. C van Manen, D D In English, see his articles, "Paul," "Romans," "Philippians," "Philemon," in *Encyclopædia Biblica*

and representatives. The doctrines they present are developments in certain directions of Paul's thought, views which it seemed to them he must have held had he been in their places. It does not occur to them that they are committing any impropriety in assuming to speak for him and in his name,—indeed, this was entirely in accord with ancient custom, is what is admitted on all hands to have been done in the case of one or more of these epistles. The newer school of critics has no new principles of criticism; it simply applies to all of these writings principles which had before been applied to three-quarters of them. What the epistles tell us of Paul is the tradition of him which subsisted at the time of their writing, skillfully worked over and put into his mouth, much as was done for the purpose of a narrative by the writer of *Acts*, who had affiliations with this Pauline group.\* They did not all work the same vein of tradition, and so they do not altogether agree, but only *Galatians* is in marked conflict with *Acts*; and *Galatians*, let it be observed, with the exception of the last two chapters, is a rather unedifying composition. As to Paul, the truth is we have nothing better than tradition about

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\* Not really one of them, or he would never have gone to the trouble of writing a gospel. Written gospels were of small account to the Paulinists.

him, and it is not to be expected that tradition will be always accordant with itself. We are prepared to be told in one place of Paul's eloquence, of his power with all sorts of assemblies ; in another that he was "rude in speech," "his bodily presence weak, and his speech of no account."

As for the fancy which has vitiated many great labors,—that the writer of Acts had Galatians and Corinthians before him, and wrote for the purpose of smoothing over and wiping out the scandal of an apostolic quarrel,—we can now happily set that all aside. We have no need to suppose that he had seen these epistles, or even that they were written before Acts. We have only to take the one and the other representation for what it seems to be worth. The result is of course a less definite conception of Paul, but a little truth outvalues much definiteness. The truth appears to be that Paul was only a somewhat less rigorous Jew than the other apostles ; that, thrown more into connection with the outside world, he more readily adapted himself to new situations, more promptly saw the expediency of not exacting from gentile converts observance of the Jewish ceremonial. Having had some Greek as well as Hebrew instruction, and spending years in Greek cities, he had become in a measure cosmopolitan. Though reared a Pharisee, he was a

Roman citizen, in which fact he took an unmistakable pride, as did all the circle who wrote in his name. In his missionary journeyings he presented himself, on his arrival in any place, first at the synagogue, from religious affiliation; his next recourse was to the Roman authorities, who are represented as listening to his word, and occasionally rescuing him from peril (Acts 21:32; 22:26; 24.23; 27:43). He showed, according to Acts, a marked partiality for Roman rule and rulers, and this for a deeper reason than the personal favors received: he had the legal turn of mind which was distinctly Roman, admired Roman law and organization. His dream of a universal Church squared well with the existing fact of a universal empire. So, while we may justly take with some allowance the accounts of the ready conversion, through his efforts, of centurions and proconsuls, we can believe that he neglected no opportunity to influence every official, civil and military, with whom he could come in contact.\* His Roman-legal spirit reacted on Jewish con-

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\* For Roman proclivities see Acts 13:12, 16:38, 39, 18:12-17, 22:27-29, 23:10-35; 26:24-32, 28:7-10. The tradition of Paul's correspondence with Seneca is of significance chiefly as indicating the Roman feeling of the Pauline school. So too his relations with Cæsar's household (Phil 4:22), the representation of a merely nominal imprisonment at Rome, with his martyrdom left out of record (Acts 28:30, 31).

ceptions and customs in the Church, and by it the Christianity of the middle of the first century was transformed, though to no such extent as implied in the epistles bearing his name. His ideas, less pronounced, less developed than the epistles would have us suppose, were resisted by the Jerusalem church, though less determinedly than we are told in Galatians, and by the laity rather than the leaders, if we may believe Acts 21 : 20 ff. He led in a great universalistic movement for which Jesus had prepared the way, and in which the initiative may well have been taken by one\* of those who had been most closely associated with Jesus. However opposed, Paul's movement grew, his convictions acquired ascendancy,—took great development in the Church after him. The Pauline party, fused finally with the Johannine, became supreme, and through it the Church acquired a theology.

The value of the epistles as religious writings does not depend on their authorship, any more than does the value of the book of Psalms. The inscriptions and salutations are indeed invalidated by criticism; but whatever in the epistles, under any construction put upon them, did us any good, remains to do it still. Though departing widely, in their doctrinal teaching,

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\* Peter (see chap XII)

from all that precedes them in the New Testament, they have a very great value religiously, ethically, and historically considered. Indeed their historical importance has been rather enhanced than diminished by the recent criticism, for they are made to cast a much needed light on the condition of the churches in the first half of the second century. The state of things at the middle of the first century is easier of conjecture, aided by what may be gathered from Acts ; and, besides, our notions of that earlier period are only thrown into hopeless confusion by taking the epistles for apostolic writings, and so as incidentally reflecting the status of the Church in apostolic times. Something has been done by scholars of previous generations to set the testimonies in right time-relations, independent thinkers having pretty generally reached the conclusion that the epistles of Peter and James, Hebrews, II. Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon, and the three pastorals, came out of a time considerably later than their writers would have us think. But these epistles, mainly doctrinal and didactic, are not the ones which most refer to existing customs and practices, the organization of the Church, its trials and persecutions ; therefore they do not furnish directly or indirectly much historical information. The ones that especially do this are the four — or

let us say six, as most authorities add Philippians and I. Thessalonians — which only the latest school of critics has ventured to place where they may historically inform rather than misinform us. These six, which, from their doctrinal development alone, we must assign with the others to the second century, give (especially Corinthians and Romans) much important information regarding the churches of the period.

Though what is said about the church in Corinth does not well hold together, being the work apparently of several different hands writing under different circumstances, we get the general impression that the members of that church were an intelligent class, — they must have been so, to understand such communications, — generous, rather affluent (as they make liberal donations), but coarse and even bestial in their habits, gorging themselves and becoming drunk at the Lord's Supper, and, at least some of them, in their morals exceedingly reprehensible. Still there must have been among them souls of a high order of culture and refinement, or no one could have thought of addressing them in the terms of the latter part of the first epistle, — especially of the famous 13th chapter, that unequalled tribute to the three Christian graces, setting upon Love or, let us say, Human Sympathy the mark of distinct, incontestable superiority. On

the whole we get from the epistles to the church at Corinth the notion of about such a community as we should naturally expect to be gathered, after fifty years or so of missionary effort, in the commercial metropolis of Greece, and one not far from Clement's representation of it about the year 100.

Romans introduces us to a far better-ordered circle, a thoroughly well-trained, well-organized Christian church,—without bishop, presbyter, or other later devised officials, to be sure, but having its prophet or preacher, its ministry of charity, its teachers, its exhorters. The intelligence and general culture assumed for this community in sending it a treatise of this sort constitutes at best a real difficulty, for even now, after all the use that has been made of the document, it might not be easy to find a church in Christendom that would well understand the reading of it. Those old Roman Christians must have had a special taste for the style of reasoning displayed in the epistle, and must have been thoroughly well tutored by their leaders for two or three generations. They appear also to have been people of high moral tone, for no reproaches are brought against them. It is obvious that they were largely Jewish in origin, though liberated from Jewish exclusiveness; for the writer assumes their acquaintance with and interest in Jewish history and

Jewish Law, and they are supposed to hold with him that the old ritual, while it may be innocently observed, avails nothing and is nowise obligatory. That problem was long before settled, and has for him and for them only an historical interest. Yet he sets forth the argument, for there were still Jews in Rome needing to be convinced. *Romans* may have been written, thinks van Manen, about the year 120.

*Philippians* brings us down a little later, showing us a church with more machinery of organization than had the church at Corinth or the one at Rome, having "bishops and deacons" (1:1); more internal difficulties, having factions, parties, divergent thinkers (1:15, 17; 3:2);—a worthy bishop's letter, full of kindly sentiment and good advice.

*Galatians* contrasts strongly with the other epistles, and no one reading it after *Philippians* could imagine it to have been written by the same hand. Its sharp anti-Jewish tone seems to preclude the possibility of its coming from a Jew, and would long since have put Paul out of the question as author but for the unfortunate theory that Paul was such a radical repudiator of Jewish customs and ideas that he could make open war on the apostles at Jerusalem—a theory whose sole support is this epistle and some equivocal statements in *II. Corinthians*. Acceptance of it makes

the writer of Acts untruthful, and brings into the primitive Church a fierce contention, improbable in itself, and of whose existence there is no sufficient evidence. The tradition, whether authentic or not, that Peter and Paul worked together fraternally in building up the church at Rome, is dead against the supposition that they had a falling out in Jerusalem over the very question of going to the gentiles, that Peter there played fast and loose; that Paul called him a dissembler (2. 13), "resisted him to the face," and could speak contemptuously of him and of James as "those who were reputed to be somewhat—whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me." Is it to be believed that one apostle would take on such a tone as this in speaking of another apostle, a fellow-worker with him for Christ? and do it in an open letter to a church? The good name of Paul, his reputation for discretion, his success as a leader, forbid our rushing to such a conclusion. The epistle is more likely to have been the work of a later day, done not by a Jew, as Paul was, but by a bitter antagonist of Judaism, especially prejudiced against Jewish Christianity, knowing enough of Jewish records to use them, but using them generally in a manner void of sense (3:16; 4:22-31). The writer appears to be a Greek of Jewish extraction, against which his Greek blood

rebels, living in the first half of the second century, who, knowing of the Council of Jerusalem at which Paul was present, and that there was then considerable difference of opinion as to how gentiles should be received into the Church, exaggerated the conflict to the detriment of the original apostles, and made Paul not only sole representative of the universalistic idea, but greatly more pronounced than we can reasonably suppose him to have been. Into the midst of a rancorous discussion, and following upon the most *cutting*\* remark, has been injected one noble passage (5 : 13–6 : 10).

The pastoral letters, three in number, two to Timothy and one to Titus,—showing further structural developments of the Church,—and the note to Philemon, followed on at no great distance. Before the middle of the second century all the Pauline epistles were in circulation.

This literature, work of the most acute and penetrating minds of the period, had an immense influence, shaping Christian thought for good or ill through the centuries, effecting a remarkable transformation. Starting from the claim of Paul to have seen Jesus and taken orders direct from him, the Pauline group

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\* Gal. 5 12 is an extraordinarily malicious, not to say vulgar, utterance to ascribe to an apostle

cut loose from dependence on the written gospel, and made for themselves a gospel of their own, of which the center was the risen and glorified Christ, and the circumference certain doctrines about Christ — his gift of himself for the sins of the world — the propitiation effected by his death — justification by faith in him — his resurrection, typical of the final resurrection of all who believe. These are points substantially independent of the gospel record, and consequently Paulinism paid next to no attention to the record. While as rigorous as was Jesus in respect of morals, and having a more strenuous if a less natural piety, the teachers of this school went straight away from his multiform assertions that entrance into life eternal is through doing the will of God, and declared that salvation is by faith in a sacrificial redemption. So in their epistles they almost never refer to a good thing that Jesus did in his lifetime, scarcely allude to his relations with the disciples, leave the Sermon on the Mount and the parables all untouched. His life among men is made little of. He is not held up as an example in any definite action of his life, — the nearest approach to such a thing being I Peter 2:21, where in a general way Christ's patience under suffering is commended to the consideration of slaves buffeted by their masters.

While, under this teaching, uprightness was enjoined as a divine requirement, the essence of religion was a belief, and not a course of conduct,—was metaphysical rather than living and practical Goodness, natural or acquired, had no bearing on one's final destiny; “by grace are ye saved, through faith, and not of works” Commending itself to the legal Roman mind, by which indeed it was conceived, Paulinism had rapid growth in the second century, especially in the West, where it dominated from the first. Its Gospel was *a system of thought*, differing widely from the Gospel that preceded it, as its advocates well knew, whence their discontent and anxiety when preachers voicing an earlier tradition came to the churches (Gal. 1·6 ff.; II. Cor. 11:4). Paul is even made to call it, in distinction, “my gospel” (Rom. 2.16) Its Christ was “the Lord Jesus Christ,” enthroned in glory, “head of all principality and power,”—never for a moment the peasant preacher of Galilee This later teaching completely eclipsed the old, and was steadily developed and strengthened century by century,—reinforced by the very foremost thinkers, illuminated by the genius of Augustine, championed by Luther, fortified by Calvin Thus has it come down to the modern world as the veritable Gospel of Christ, if not the primitive form of that Gospel, at least fully accordant therewith.

So thoroughly imbued even now with this idea is the mind of the Church that people are startled when it is called in question, and great scholars who see that Paulinism is secondary, a transformation of the original Gospel, yet declare it a legitimate outgrowth, "a new and higher development from the first Christianity."\* A remarkable development it no doubt was;—but this is to be borne in mind: not all developments are into higher forms. The movement which made of the Gospel a system of thought, a set of dogmas, on the acceptance of which fellowship and salvation are conditioned, was a prodigious step in the wrong direction, for which the Church has paid dearly, and which certainly must yet be retraced. We have to begin anew with the teachings of Jesus, and have before us the task of making religion appear to be a life and not a belief—a task which ought to be easy, but which is rendered enormously difficult by the age-long prepossessions derived from Paulinism

And these prepossessions are directly in the way of any right understanding of the Pauline movement itself, and of any just criticism of its literature. They who with the New Testament in their hands stolidly insist that the epistles are coincident with the gospels

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\* The expression is van Manen's It is defensible only, if at all in speaking of Christianity as a doctrinal system

— that they are only another way of saying the same thing,— are beyond hope of being reasoned with on the subject. They who do see in the epistles a different pointing to the way of life, an “advance” upon the gospels, or, let us say, a more complete revelation, generally feel constrained to hold them of apostolic origin or at least of the apostolic age,— current opinion having it that by some imaginary statute of limitations revelation became inoperative at some undetermined moment toward the close of the first century. This is to tie the hands of investigation, or suborn the investigator to bring in a certain verdict. Almost everywhere the ascendancy of Paulinism is still so complete in the churches that return to the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus would appear to be giving up the more for the less sacred.

What the Pauline literature in the New Testament is to be taken for is a transformation of the Gospel under Roman influence a century and more after the Christian era, effected by a band of vigorous and most devoted thinkers on whom had fallen the mantle of Paul. The exaltation of the crucified one, steadily growing through the years, had directly prompted a mass of doctrine about him, his nature, his office in the redemption of such as are foreordained to salvation, his triumph over death, his ascension into heaven

and his rank there, his imminent return to judge the world,—grandiose notions, dwarfing wholly the story of his wandering footsore and weary by the lake and over the hills of Galilee. In the developed scheme was something worthy, it was deemed, of an ambassador from the court of Heaven, one whom God “appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds, who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”! With such conceptions in mind, one of these writers could frankly say: “Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more” They had a more “glorious gospel,” the gospel of “sound doctrine.” At all events it was the gospel most readily acceptable to the Roman world, allying itself most naturally with a pomp of ceremony dear to the hearts of converts from paganism, and so, perhaps better than the original Gospel could have done, it, in a manner, served the age in which it first flourished.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### The Johannine Literature.

The Apocalypse — Authorship — Interpretation — Remarkably successful prophecy — The epistles — Fourth Gospel — Compared with the other gospels — Scene of Jesus' activity — Order of events — Acts and utterances — Author's selection of imposing miracles — Absence of parables and of the phrase "the kingdom of heaven" — Long discourses — Doctrinal purpose throughout — Indifference to facts — Studied glorification of the hero — Date — Distinctive features of the four gospels reflect the culture of four successive generations.

THE mind of the Church in the first half of the second century showed two distinct tendencies, the permanent literary results of which are two great divisions of the New Testament, including all or nearly all of it except the synoptic gospels. Parallel with the development of Paulinism, which was touched in some more or less remote way by a Roman influence, sprang up a group of writers who took the name of John, intensely Jewish at first, but coming later under a Greek influence, and, especially in the beginning, out of accord with Paulinism.

About the close of the first century was produced an apocalypse, which, for the purpose perhaps of gain-

ing the repute of apostolic authorship, called itself the Revelation of John. The author nowhere says he is the apostle, but is evidently willing that anybody should think so, and, notwithstanding the multiplicity of Johns in ancient as in modern times, not a few have always insisted that this John is no other than the apostle. On the other hand many, beginning with Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria at the middle of the third century, have at various times attributed the writing to another John. Dionysius' reasonable suspicion that there may have been more than one John was much strengthened by the fact that in his day two separate graves of the apostle were shown at Ephesus. There is tradition of one John the presbyter, occupied about this time with the churches of Asia Minor, and he has been much talked of as the probable author — a conjecture widely adopted, but only a conjecture. It is safe to say there must have been a dozen or twenty persons by that name in the Church at the date in question, any one of whom was more likely to write the Apocalypse than the apostle who must then have been, if living, about one hundred years old; who had been a fisherman, and who is expressly referred to in Acts as an "unlearned and ignorant" man. The writer of this book gives no sign of old age, and, though his Greek might have brought on him some derision in

Athens, he was certainly neither unlearned nor ignorant. Still it is not impossible, though highly improbable, that the apostle wrote this book or some part of it.

The Apocalypse has had the most extraordinary interpretations ; has proved a regular arsenal for bellicose Protestants in quest of prophetic bombs to hurl against the Roman Church. They see that Church and its agencies in all the hideous pictures there presented — in the scarlet woman drunken with the blood of saints, the beast with seven heads and ten horns, the terrible dragon whose tail drew down the third part of the stars of heaven. But aside from those who are looking and longing for some supernatural destruction to fall upon their opponents, the book in these days has few readers. Its symbolism is little intelligible to the modern mind, which is intolerant of intentional obscurities and hidden meanings. We are so accustomed to freedom of speech that we do not adequately take into account the necessity men once were under to communicate their deepest feelings in terms which none but the initiated could understand.

The book begins with seven addresses, one to each of the seven churches of Asia, the whole making up three chapters which are so void of relation to the rest of the book — wherein the author makes a covert

but most terrific assault upon the imperial power of Rome—that we are compelled to think the introduction a mere foil to mislead the readers for whose eyes the work was not intended into taking it throughout for an admonition to the churches. The writer is a Jewish Christian who, even after the destruction of Jerusalem, still clings to the fortunes of his people, holding that God will yet send redemption when Christ shall come from heaven with his angels to turn and overturn the world. The Roman empire—for that, in one form and another, is what is symbolized as provoking the wrath of Heaven—is to be swept with the besom of destruction. Its great sin is not as we might expect, its treatment of the Jews or its persecution of Christians, but its worship of the beast, that is, Cæsar-worship. “What the book predicts is the great conflict about to break out all over the world between Christianity on the one hand and the Roman empire (with the Roman State religion, the worship of the emperors) on the other” (Bousset). Nero, that terror of the world, had at this writing been dead some thirty years; he was to come up from hell and lead the embattled legions of the accursed power against the army of the Lord—the possible return of that monster to the world he so cursed having, from the time of his death, been a dread apprehension

from one end of the empire to the other. But, let the devils do their worst, the triumph of Christianity is sure; the Lord Jesus with his mighty angels will fight with his saints, and the victory of righteousness will be complete. The whole battle-picture is but a symbolic representation of the struggle of truth with error, of good with evil, by which the Church was to overcome and transform the world, bringing the "holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God."

The conception is of the noblest, and the symbolism of prophecy meets the requirements of prudence, making possible in this enigmatical form an utterance which in plain terms would have been insane audacity. Open denunciation of the worship of Cæsar, exulting prediction of the fall of Rome in so many words, were not to be thought of; but "the beast" and "Babylon" could be handled without gloves. And the work was done in a masterly fashion. Less easy to grasp under the changed circumstances of modern life, the Apocalypse will yet repay the student's labor who gets hold of the right thread for its unraveling, for it gives, under a symbolism borrowed from the myths of all the East, a faithful picture of the conditions of the time, and has the merit, not always pertaining to prophecy, of a foresight accurate at least as to the main features

The success of the work is the more signal and complete in that it is unique in the New Testament, the last word of canonical prophecy, and a prophecy uttered in the writer's own name five hundred years after such a thing had come to be accounted impracticable. Herein lies one of the signs of the tremendous vitality of the Christian movement in its beginnings.

The furious enmity of this writer toward things Roman belongs to a stage earlier than developed Paulinism, which, as we have seen, is marked by a studied deference to "the powers that be," a policy of conciliation, of loyalty to the government under any and all circumstances. The later attitude prevailed, and even in the Johannine literature the harsh note is heard no more. In fact the subsequent writings of the school might seem at first glance to have no other tie to the Apocalypse than the common name, assumed or reputed, of the authors, but on closer inspection we see that the tone of comfort and assurance, the note of triumph in the earlier book, are taken up by the otherwise very different writings that follow.

Three brief epistles are next to be considered, the last two the very shortest "books" of the Bible, only about three hundred words each, notes, as we should say, rather than letters; all the subject of much controversy as to whose they are. Quite obviously they

could not have been written by the same hand that wrote the Apocalypse; many think, too, that they have not a common authorship with the gospel of John; and further, it is by no means agreed that the three epistles are of one source. So there is room to think that in this literature we have five different writers, or more, if the Apocalypse is regarded as a composite work. Only one of these could by any possibility have been the apostle, and the only one of these writings from whose production he is not barred by the circumstance of time is the earliest,—that is, the Apocalypse. As to epistles and gospel, which are of the second century, apostolic authorship is out of the question.

Who, then, wrote the epistles? There is scanty ground for saying The writer of the first of them does not give his name or ecclesiastical designation; we have the name only in the title, which did not originate with him: "The First Epistle of John" The second and third epistles purport to come from "the elder," by which designation, taken with the title, in which the name of John occurs, John the elder, above mentioned, is apparently indicated. But if that John wrote the Apocalypse, these, so different in language and style, could have been written only in his name. All three are of a time when factions and

heresies were springing up in the Church. Toward these the writer takes on a dictatorial, autocratic tone, as of an official clothed with some authority. He does not argue with opponents ; he pronounces against them, as one whose word is final. Withal, he is a man of deep spiritual thought, and some of his passages are among the sayings most treasured by devout souls. Who has not been moved to tenderness by such words as, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God"? or as these : "This is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another", "God is love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him"? And how grate upon these some other things, such as the summary disposing of an opponent with, "He is a liar, and the truth is not in him"!

We come now to the main piece of the Johannine literature, known as the Gospel of John. This work has long been the storm-center of New Testament critical controversy, volumes having been written concerning its date and authorship, its remarkable divergence in every way from the other gospels, its value as a narrative of facts, its doctrinal purpose. The wide range and consequently sketchy character of the present work will permit of only a restricted glance at

these problems as they now present themselves, and at such phases of them as may be expected to interest the general reader.

The Fourth Gospel is the book nearest of all to the heart of the devout Christian. And this for many reasons. In the first place the figure of the Christ rises there to something like the dignity it has in the thought of the present time, and of any time these sixteen hundred years. Again, the words of Jesus are much more expansive and effusive; and, as the speaker is more exalted than in the other gospels, his sympathy and tenderness are more impressive. And, too, there is here a developed doctrine of God and of the soul, of sin and of redemption; deep spiritual conceptions of life and of love, of duty and of destiny. Thus this gospel has been called with great affection a revelation of the heart of Christ.

But it is not possible to stop with the spiritual purport of a narrative which follows three other narratives all professing to cover the same ground; we are forced to compare it with them, as we have compared them with one another, in order the better to satisfy ourselves as to its historical value. The result in this comparison is in striking contrast with the result in the other. In that case the deepest impression was made by the marked agreements of the three synop-

tists; in comparing John with them, or with any one of them, what we most note are the marked divergences, the absolutely irreconcilable statements.

To begin at the beginning, the account of John the Baptist is here so minimized and his rôle so reduced as to give no such impression of the man as that obtained from the synoptists. There he is a prophet of the first order, preaching repentance, looking for the Messiah, hoping, yet doubting, that Jesus is the long-expected one. Here nothing is said of his preaching of repentance, his sole function being to testify to the Messiahship of Jesus, which he never for a moment doubts, the fact having been certified to him by revelation from on high. His position is thus changed to one of complete subordination, he is simply a witness brought in at the outset to testify to a supernatural appearance by which Jesus had been indicated to him as the Christ.

Passing to the record of Jesus' own career, we find the scene of it represented by the synoptists as being almost wholly in Galilee, the only instance of his going to Jerusalem in the course of his ministry being at the very last. The Fourth Gospel reverses all this, makes Judea the principal scene of his labors, with only occasional brief visits to Galilee. It seems to the writer better to comport with the exalted dignity of

the Master that his work should be done mainly in and about the Holy City. The order of events is also here radically changed, so far as reference is made to events before reported. The expulsion of the traders and money-changers from the temple, according to the synoptists, occurred near the close of his ministry, and appears to have been the incident which fired the indignation of the authorities to the point of resolving on his death. But this gospel puts it among the very first things that Jesus did, and there are no grave consequences. The Jews from the beginning are made to show an animosity toward him not indicated in the other gospels; but their enmity is without result because "his time has not yet come"; by his divine superiority he eludes their wiles. As has often been remarked, the Jews are referred to in this gospel as though they were a people not of the nationality of the writer or of Jesus. In speaking of the Law to the Jews he is made to say "your law" (8:17; 10:34); to the disciples, "their law" (15:25); indicating a different point of view from the synoptists. Jesus is already only half a Jew—hardly that; he is Son of God, not son of David, least of all son of the carpenter.

The widest divergences are in regard to what Jesus did and said. Of the "casting out of demons," a

thaumaturgical proceeding common in the old time and of which the synoptists give many instances, this writer says not a word. It seems to him too cheap an order of wonders to be ascribed to the Son of God. What he tells of him in the line of marvel shall be of the most remarkable and astonishing. The feeding of five thousand on five loaves and two small fishes is of this sort, and he gives it substantially as the others give it (6: 2-14). The story of Jesus walking on the water is also sufficiently striking, he takes that, but enlarges it to his purpose; for, while Matthew and Mark have him walk out only to the boat, John heightens the marvel by making him walk the storm-tossed billows clear across the lake, a distance of some eight miles (6: 16-25). The only cure of sickness which he relates is that of a nobleman's son lying at the point of death, and this cure Jesus effected without ever going near the youth (4: 47-54). A man, cripple for thirty-eight years, is conspicuously healed at Bethesda (5: 1-9), and in Jerusalem one born blind receives his sight (9: 6-16). To these are to be added what is expressly called the first miracle of Jesus (2: 11), the turning of water into wine, and what appears to be his last, the raising of Lazarus from the tomb four days after his death. The cure of the nobleman's son may be founded on

that of the centurion's servant, but the Bethesda healing, the wine miracle, and the raising of Lazarus are unknown to the synoptists. It is inconceivable how this last most stupendous of miracles, if it rested on any genuine tradition, should have been omitted by all three of the preceding evangelists. John relates it in the most circumstantial fashion (ii : 1-44) and at great length, representing it, as he does all the miracles he recounts, as a sign, a testimony that the worker is the mighty Son of God ; all of which is in direct contradiction of the synoptists, who make Jesus say expressly that no sign would be given (Matt. 16 : 4 ; Mark 8 : 12 ; Luke 11 : 29).

There is also irreconcilable disagreement as to the date of the crucifixion, John's theory of Jesus as the "Lamb of God" making it seem fitting that the great sacrifice should fall on the day when, from time immemorial, the paschal lamb had been slaughtered. The difference of reckoning is not great, but it is an irreducible difference.

To the ordinary reader, however, these divergences are less striking than that seen in the report of what Jesus said. In the synoptic gospels his utterances are usually brief, marked by a frequent use of parables, and turn persistently to the topic of the kingdom of heaven and its coming ; here, on the contrary we have

prolonged discourses, no parables, and scarcely a reference to the kingdom of heaven. The style of these discourses has no likeness to that of Jesus in the other gospels, but is indistinguishable from the style of the writer himself, so that sometimes it is difficult, if not impossible, to tell where a discourse ends and the narrator's comments begin ; as for example in 3 : 27–36. We miss the freshness and variety of topics, so noticeable in the previous narratives, and are conscious of a certain monotony, a wearisome recurrence to the same themes. There are traces enough of the other gospels to show that use was made of them by this later writer, but he has so transformed the Master's words as to convey ideas not suggested by the previous statements. In the synoptics, Jesus seeks by the expression of spiritual truth to point out the way of life ; in the Fourth Gospel he is himself the truth, the way, and the life. A developed doctrine both of him and his mission is set forth, such as was not dreamed of in the early decades of the Church. The very first lines of this gospel indicate the change that was coming over the minds of Christians at the time concerning the nature of the Christ, a change which it was the special purpose of the writer to further. It is a second-century conception that he champions ; and a reflection of that period is seen in the representation

that, from the outset, the Jewish partition wall was broken down and salvation offered to all the world (4: 39-42; 12: 20 ff.) ; a view which, for the purpose of throwing the glory of it back upon the Master, ignores the whole Pauline struggle for this very thing. But all this is at variance with the facts in the case as we have them from every other source.

Many more considerations, all pointing the same way, might be adduced, but enough has been said to show that what we have in the Fourth Gospel is not, as a whole, historical. A few statements, particularly toward the end, taken from the other gospels, are to be excepted. Possibly beyond these some genuine tradition which escaped the scrutiny of the synoptists may be lodged here and there, some tender word that Jesus really spoke. We should be glad to think there is some actual reminiscence of him in the story of the Samaritan woman, and in the comforting chapter beginning · “ Let not your heart be troubled ” , but generally the doctrinal transformation is so manifest as to preclude any such notion. The discourses are to be valued for what of truth they contain, but they are the writer’s and not the Master’s

The view we are compelled to take of this gospel is that it was written for the express purpose of furthering certain profound conceptions of the Christ and

of his relation to the Church which had taken possession of the writer — conceptions succinctly set forth in his first paragraph (1 : 1-18), as it in frank admission to all readers that such was his purpose. He wanted to make the best and the most efficient possible statement of the ideas and sentiments of his school of thoughtful and devout Christians whose minds had been fertilized by the Greek influence in the fecund second quarter of the second century ; and he hit upon the plan of embodying those ideas in what we should call a sort of historical romance, giving himself great liberty in his treatment of his characters, putting into the mouth of the exalted, deific Christ what in his own heart he felt assured was the very truth of God. Starting out with this intention, he kept the main purpose ever uppermost in mind ; adherence to historical fact in his narrative was a secondary, unimportant consideration and must give way at every turn to the ruling idea. He wrote, not to relate what actually happened a hundred years before, but to set forth the Gospel as it had come to stand in the minds of his advanced circle, and consequently he did not feel bound to follow the course of events as recited by the synoptists ; taking in this matter much the same attitude as the contemporary Paulinists, who cared not to know of Jesus "after the flesh," but would

know him only after the spirit, that is, according to their conception of him. Hence a general indifference of this writer to the facts, extending not only to the statements of the synoptists, but even to his own statements. Thus we are told (3 : 26) that the people flock to the preaching of Jesus and are baptized; and yet before we get to the end of the chapter we read (3 : 32) that "no one received his testimony." In this chapter he states over and over that Jesus baptized; in the next he says Jesus did not baptize. After telling the story of the feeding of five thousand on a mountain, the writer, representing Jesus as wishing to escape from the furor caused by so great a miracle, and forgetting that he was already on the mountain, makes him go up again (6 : 15). These illustrations show how unimportant in the estimation of the writer were the facts of his narrative. What he was solely concerned to present was a picture of the Christ in his earthly passage which should partake somewhat of the glory of his heavenly state; and for this it needed to draw a veil over his humiliations and to invent scenes in which his superhuman powers should shine forth more transcendently than in the previous records.

A work of this kind would be attended with more difficulties at the present day (though novelists of little and of great repute have ventured into the same field),

on account of the prejudice against handling sacred characters in fiction. The conditions at the time of this writing were very different. Besides, a work whose very purpose was to enhance the sanctity of a sacred name commended itself, however imaginative. Readers were not critical; what is more, they partook of the writer's views, had been carried along by the same tendencies, and were quite prepared to accept his representation as, at any rate, spiritually true.

This gospel was promptly welcomed in the circle of Johannine influence, among the Paulinists less readily, making its way, however, before the end of the second century. "Distinct declarations as to its genuineness begin to appear certainly not earlier than 170 A.D." (Schmiedel). With the exception of II. Peter and the little Epistle of Jude, — two writings so far subsequent to these divisions of tendency as to show slight trace of them, — it is probably the youngest part of the New Testament. The ablest authorities place its date at about 140.

Definite and precise indications of date in the book itself are scanty and uncertain; consequently whatever gives a possible suggestion is seized upon with avidity. Jesus is made to say (5:43), "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." This has

been supposed by some critics to apply to Barchochba, a pretended Messiah who, in A.D. 132, led the Jews into a final revolt which ended in the entire destruction of the Jewish State in A.D. 135. If this is the real reference,—and, in view of other indications of date pointing to about this time, the interpretation looks plausible,—it gives a very important clue in furnishing a definite limit before which the writing could not have appeared.

In the different style and quality of the four gospels is reflected the advance in culture that went on in the Christian communities for a hundred years. First of the four came Mark, rude in structure, a plain statement by a plain man for plain people. To meet the demands of the next generation, when converts to Christianity had become numerous and were of all classes, a more extended and better-written gospel appeared, in Matthew. For a third generation of Christians, which included many cultivated people, a really accomplished writer prepared the Third Gospel. But, with a difference of style and compass, the groundwork had remained the same; in all three, Jesus was a man, and a member of the despised Jewish race. Not even the miraculous origin provided in Matthew, and dwelt upon in Luke, could relieve him of that imputation, and here was an obstacle to the publica-

tion of the Gospel among the Greeks, who, toward the middle of the second century, had become the chief hope of the Christian propaganda. The Fourth Gospel met the new occasion with a presentation of Christ as the divine Logos, independent of human generation, existing from eternity. Thus, by introducing a conception of Greek philosophy, the objectionable Jewish nativity of Jesus was practically disposed of, and acceptance of the Gospel by the whole gentile world was made possible. The same broad culture and deep mysticism, which reached out and added to the Gospel this Greek idea, spiritualized the doctrines of God (4 : 21-24), the second coming of Christ (4 : 16-18), and the resurrection and final judgment (11 : 26; 5 : 24), and in one great utterance cut religion in its essence free from forms and all externalities : "It is the spirit that giveth life ; the flesh profiteth nothing : the words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." While the writer insists stoutly on belief, his mystical statement of the things to be believed constitutes a very different proposition from the legal rigidity of the Pauline theology ; one can find a way, if one seeks, to accept nearly everything he requires. One can see at any rate that this gospel saved the Christian Church when it came fairly to confront the Greek philosophical world.

## CHAPTER XV.

### Religious Evolution in New Testament Times.

Religious ideas which Jesus assumed as current beliefs — Immortality and demonology — Jesus and his aims — Idea of God — Human brotherhood — Unfailing trust — Emphasis on the resurrection subsequent to Jesus — Church organization — Doctrinal basis adjusted to gentile prepossessions — The atoning sacrifice — Availability thereof to escape the death of sin — Multiform notions of resurrection — Decline of demonology — The Johannine transformation of the Gospel — Gain and loss in the process

AS already shown,\* the development of religion in Israel was continuous from the date of the last Old Testament writing, straight on to the ministry of Jesus, the gap between the two divisions of our scriptures being marked by more than usual activity. Consequently, in coming to the New Testament from the Old, the two being separated by the march of centuries, we get another and very different impression of social, moral, and religious conditions, — an impression in many respects as of the modern

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\* Chapter VII.

world. In his talks to the people Jesus assumes the prevalence of notions of God and of human duty, of social and domestic regulations almost identical with those of our day; even his most advanced utterances looking toward a universal brotherhood are received by his hearers in a way to imply that they have been heard and discussed before. Contact with Greece and Rome for several centuries, though at times repulsive and never welcome, had its effect in modifying the Jewish character, in shaping the current beliefs and practices. The most striking change of opinion to be noted is that touching the immortality of the soul, a doctrine for which the Jewish mind had little affinity in the earlier days. Jesus assumes it without argument as a current belief of the people. The disbelievers are only a small sect, no larger proportion of the community, probably, than the disbelievers among us. Foreign influence, which wrought so decided a modification of views at this point, was not without its effect in many other directions; but, as we might expect, the change was not always for the better. A notably unfavorable impression is given in passing from the Old Testament to the New in the greatly strengthened demonology met with there. The first three gospels and Acts are filled with stories of possession and exorcism — superstitions which cut little figure in earlier Bible times.

The preaching of immortality in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era seems to have given the doctrine of demons, which belongs properly to primitive man, a fresh foothold, and we have the anomaly of a really advanced civilization demeaned by this unseemly delusion.

Judaism, since the exile, had been exposed to the peril which besets all forms of religion strongly ritualistic, of degenerating into a mere round of ceremonies, a peril which was ever present to the spiritually minded, who did what they could to avert it. The gospel record begins with some account of one of these, known as John the Baptist, a vigorous preacher of repentance, who in his one rite foreign to the old Law overflowed and obscured the interminable priestly requirements. And John was but one of many who in those days were earnestly seeking after a better way, all unwittingly forerunners of the prophet of Nazareth, and lost to view in his greater glory. But the fact is not to be overlooked that there were those, and many of them, who "prepared the way before him."

A great genius, by the very terms of the designation, has about him something of the extraordinary, the inexplicable. His antecedents do not to our eyes fully account for him; his arrival partakes of the

mystery of the unforeseen *eclosion* of a new variety in the plant or the animal world. And this is equally the case whether his appearance be in the field of science, of art, or of religion. We marvel, but we know it is in the order of Nature. We do not well take the measure of a genius when we have him by our side; much less can we do it when he is separated by an interval of many centuries. There is reason to think, however, that modern studies are leading to a better apprehension of Jesus than has ever before been gained. By not crediting him with things he did not attempt to do we can more clearly see the character of his real achievements. His aim was to effect a reformation of Judaism, and only because Judaism would not be reformed did the bearers of his word after his death turn with it to the gentiles. What we can say of him in this regard is that he took, on the whole, such an attitude toward foreigners as to make possible in the later time a proclamation of his Gospel to them. He is to be studied as a Jewish prophet with universalistic feelings and tendencies stronger than had before been manifested by any of his nation, yet still considering his mission to be to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10: 5, 6). The apparently authentic story of his interview with the Syrophenician woman (Matt. 15: 21-28; Mark 7:

24-30) puts this beyond reasonable doubt. His part was to preach a purer religion to the Jewish people; and this he did in such a spirit and so comprehensively that, later, it was found a religion good for all mankind. In his hands the ritual lost its supreme importance; though he observed it, he counted it secondary. It had no regenerating power. So he never let it stand in the way of his doing a good deed. If he could help anybody on the Sabbath-day he would do it, despite the prohibition of labor on that day. The appointed feasts, the sacrifices, the oblations, and the ablutions had scant recognition from him. The heart and life were of such vastly greater importance than these formalities as to take all the emphasis in his utterances (Matt. 23: 2, 3; 7: 21-25; Luke 10: 25-37). The Sermon on the Mount is, from end to end, a compend of moral and religious duty in which ritual goes for next to nothing; a statement of universal principles, rising in almost every paragraph above distinctions of race, finding a response in every heart of man.

Jesus put a new and exceeding tenderness into the thought of God, brought Him near to man, made Him a benevolent, loving Father, hardly addressing Him or referring to Him by any other than that endearing name. He not only uses the name, he insists on ap-

plying its significance, following out the parallelism with human parentage, from which the divine differs only as the Infinite differs from the finite (Matt. 7 : 9-11). Very rarely indeed is God called by this name in the Old Testament , very rarely, too, in the books of other religions , its well-nigh exclusive use is characteristic of the teaching of Jesus. It may not be scientific, but it is significant, and marks the greatest practical modification ever made in the idea of God. It liberated man from the old fancy that the Power above is inimical, needing to be placated with offerings, a dangerous Power into whose hands one may fear to fall.

Jesus taught the brotherhood of man, giving the idea — if the parable of the Good Samaritan is his extension beyond the bounds of the Jewish race. He instituted equality on a basis that went deeper than equity, and graduated duty according to ability, making it obligatory upon the strong to serve the weak, rating the merit of a gift by its proportion to the giver's means, — the widow's mite more than balancing the contributions of the rich, because it was all her living. He reversed the whole idea of rank among men, in the remarkable saying supported by a double tradition : "Ye know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them, and their great men exercise a strict authority

over them. Not so shall it be among you, but whoever desireth to become great among you will be your servant; and whoever desireth to be first among you will be your bond-servant." So he would have his disciples, when they make a feast, refrain from inviting their friends and relatives and rich neighbors, and call in "the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind." With him the obligation of service was commensurate with resources. The motto, *noblesse oblige*, which holds the soul of chivalry, was coined out of his gold. He went further, he would have us serve not only those who do nothing for us, but those even who do us harm; love our enemies, and bless them that curse us. It is unnecessary here to ask whether such teaching had ever been heard before, enough to say that it was new in Israel. We are ready to believe that some of the better informed who heard him dropped the remark, "Never man spoke like this man."

And religion in the gospel presentation lost its sorrowful tone, put off its look of gloom. Though poor, and as good as homeless, Jesus kept a cheerful heart, was never so abandoned and abused but that he had a word of comfort for a troubled soul. He may have sometimes gone hungry, but he did no voluntary fasting, and required none of his disciples. One of

the reproaches hurled at him by the stricter sort was that he wore too cheerful a countenance, enjoyed the good things of life, eating and drinking like other men. His first public utterance, according to Matthew, opens with a burst of felicitations, a proclamation of blessedness, of happiness; and to the end the note of gladness was never wholly lost, turning under adversity into trustful resignation. Seldom before or since has there been exemplified a piety so natural, so free from eccentricities and exaggerations, as that of the little circle of primitive disciples during the lifetime of the Master.

The sense of deathlessness which, in Jesus, was of the strongest, coupled with the threatening attitude of his enemies, their evident design to make away with him, led his prophetic spirit into vaticinations, more or less vaguely set forth, of a return to earth which he would make after death, when there would be a definitive setting up of the kingdom he had at heart. The shock of the crucifixion brought these utterances to the memory of the disciples, and in the high tension of the time numerous apparitions of their lost leader were reported. Resurrection was no new idea to the Jewish mind; it had been popularized for two centuries (Dan. 12: 2, 3); in the book of Enoch the doctrine had been fully elaborated. The apparently

authentic reports of the reappearance of Jesus after his burial afforded ample ground for the affirmation that the doctrine had, in his person, received its first and most significant demonstration ; and thus arose the first definite addition to his teaching. As is apt to be the case with a supplementary thought which takes fast hold upon the mind, its importance was disproportionately magnified, so as largely to eclipse the thing supplemented. “Preaching Christ” became in great measure the preaching of the resurrection. This is the first departure, to be marked in Acts, from the method and the topics of Jesus in the synoptic gospels. The Gospel began to be construed as glad tidings of possible prospective escape from the underworld. Not that this consideration by any means exhausted the Gospel as declared by the apostles and their associates ; but it received an emphasis that markedly differentiated their preaching from the preaching of Jesus. It was the first step in religious evolution taken by the Church bereft of its founder. The whole conception of the life beyond was gradually revolutionized. The pre-Christian idea, with Jews as with pagans, had been of a more or less dismal underworld to which good and bad alike went at death. Heaven was the exclusive abode of God and His angels. But the new teaching, as it grew, changed

all this. Jesus, it came to be said, ascended into heaven and took a seat at the right hand of God, there to receive through the ages to come all the host of his followers. This brighter prospect was hailed as an immense advance upon the dreary eschatology which had so long burdened even the Greek world.

Church organization followed, first of a simple order, with few officers, gradually increasing in complexity till, before the close of the New Testament canon, besides pastors and deacons, there were teachers, elders, presbyters, bishops, the Church fashioning itself more and more on the pattern of the Roman civic organization. The beginnings of this process, which went on in a most natural way, may be seen (Acts 6. 1-6) in the choosing of seven members of the church in Jerusalem (then the only church) to relieve the apostles' labors by looking after charity and money matters. So rudimentary was the organization then that there was no name for the newly selected officers. Ninety years or so later, when the epistle to the Philippians came to be written, it could be addressed "to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, *with the bishops and deacons.*" Several other of the later epistles indicate the existence of an incipient hierarchy, so rapid was this development.

As this went on there was further and great development of doctrine. Even in apostolic days the problem had to be met of receiving gentiles into the Church, and, when they were admitted without first becoming Jews, the way was opened for the repudiation of the whole Jewish ceremonial not only for gentile but for Jewish Christians as well. This fundamental question was, we may be sure, a long time brewing, and was not disposed of during the lifetime of the apostles, nor till the Jewish constituency in the Church became a minority that could be dealt with somewhat authoritatively, or safely ignored. The more liberal policy had been championed by Paul, whether initiated by him or not, and his followers carried it through in his name, working at the same time other and more profound modifications of the Christian faith. With the augmentation of gentile elements in the Church, and the ever increasing tendency to organize in the manner of the Roman State, came an application of Greek and Roman thought to the Jewish fundamentals of the Gospel, with thoroughgoing and far-reaching effects. The doctrine of propitiation by a bloody sacrifice, common to all ancient peoples, afforded a basis on which to unite Jew and gentile. The violent death of Jesus, who was more than Jew, who came to be considered "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of the

whole creation," was proclaimed the supreme offering for the sins of the world, by virtue of which atonement was made once for all, and salvation secured for every believing soul. That offering made an end of the old Law, of the old order of sacrifice; no more need of temples and altars and priests making propitiation through the blood of goats and calves, for all that work had been accomplished "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

At the same time the doctrine of sin was developed with more than Jewish rigor. The blight came, according to the Pauline teaching (second century), through the disobedience of the first man, and so passed upon all men, bringing them under the curse of the divine Law and subject to eternal death. From this the only possible escape is through faith in Christ and in the efficacy of his atoning blood. The inherited guilt is too deep to be washed away in any tears of penitence, too grave to be counterbalanced by any possible good works. Nothing avails but reliance on the merits of the crucified one. Every man's salvation is in his own hands, and is attainable through grateful acceptance of the proffered terms, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who has paid a ransom potentially adequate for the redemption of all, and made individually applicable by spiritual self-surrender. In verifi-

cation of the genuineness of this act the subject will thereafter walk in newness of life.

The opportunity of universal salvation, and the certainty of the offer not being universally accepted, led directly to the development of the doctrine that certain souls are predestined from the beginning to salvation, foreordained to repent and believe. Every good thing is from God, even to the most private personal impulse to be good. "Whom he foreknew he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son ; and whom he foreordained, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." The reconciliation of this with the doctrine of free will, on which the very appeal of the preacher must rest, became the occasion for interminable polemics. But in the highest thinking perfect rationality is not to be looked for ; all our thoughts on infinite things end at last in contradiction ; and from these difficulties one can always honorably retreat under cover of the saying, "Great is the mystery of godliness." This fact should only lead us to approach the great mysteries with diffidence.

Theories of the resurrection and of the life beyond were also further unfolded by the Paulinists in the first half of the second century. A variety of views

are presented in the several Pauline epistles, which under the old theory of their authorship were supposed to mark the growth of the subject in the apostle's mind, but which are now better explained by taking these writings as the work of a number of different persons, having only a general affiliation as of the school of Paul, and, like other pupils, going far beyond their teacher. On a subject so highly speculative it is to be expected that different writers would present widely different conceptions, and such in fact is the case. In Thessalonians only the righteous dead are raised, but the representation of this is very graphically set forth. The resurrection of Jesus is taken as a pledge that "them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him." The writer then goes on to describe the great event when "the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God," whereupon the first thing to take place is the coming forth of the Christian dead from their graves. Then the living Christians are to be "caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air." Nothing is said of any resurrection of the unconverted. Nevertheless, this is a much more definite statement than is to be met with in the gospels. Other epistles (I. Cor. 15: 35-49; II. Cor. 5: 1-8) have it that the souls of believers

pass immediately after death into the heavenly state. Philippians, Colossians, and Ephesians show yet further development of the Pauline eschatology, particularly in exalting the office of the Son of God in the great scenes to be finally unrolled.

A very marked advance is disclosed in the epistles in respect of demonology. While accounts of possessions and exorcisms abound in the synoptic gospels and in the record of apostolic times, they are nearly banished from the later Fourth Gospel, and the epistles (also, as we suppose, works of the second century) are silent on these subjects. From the fact that outside the Christian Church demonology held its own through all that period, this is a feature the more notable, showing, in the leaders of the Church from whom these writings proceeded, a decided superiority to their time. Indeed, so far advanced were they in their thought that they have furnished to this day the doctrinal basis for almost all orders of Christians, from which they have a modernity in striking contrast with much of the gospel narrative and of Acts.

Compared with the Pauline writings, the Johannine connote a religious development less rigidly doctrinal, less dependent on ratiocination, more spiritual, more mystical. They show less of the Roman, more of the Greek influence. While they are the index of a trans-

formation of the original gospel equally sweeping in another direction, they have, from their more fervid tone, always seemed to enshrine more of the spirit of Jesus. The principal of these writings, being a gospel, could hardly fail to do this ; but, as hereinbefore observed, it is a gospel which is made the vehicle of second-century ideas and sentiments. Setting out with a Christology more advanced even than the Pauline, and designed to obviate all anti-Jewish prejudices against the new faith by raising its founder to supramundane rank as the eternally existing Word mysteriously made flesh and dwelling among men, -- yet never showing the first trace of a Jew in mind or in feature, and offering salvation to men of all races without discrimination, — it makes Jesus (conscious from the first of his Messianic mission) speak with an unquestionable, though benignant authority, voicing the exalted, tender, mystical conceptions of the writer and his school ; conceptions the germ of which was doubtless often some actual remembered word of Jesus, but the expansion the writer's own. This gospel presents the thought of Jesus developed through the ponderings of a truly religious and highly gifted soul, writing under greatly changed conditions and for cultivated, philosophical readers. The writer of this gospel, — best considered as a weighty

historical romance,— who probably wrote also the first epistle of John, sought in both to make Christianity acceptable to the Greek mind, which was an indispensable preliminary to its becoming a world-religion ; and this he did by setting forth an ideal Christ, with a profound restatement of the Christian teaching His transformations were effected by omissions from the more primitive gospel, by great extensions, and by treatment from a fresh point of view. The omissions were of such incidents and expressions as he felt to be derogatory to the exalted, godlike character which the Christ had taken on in his mind, or such as were not likely to commend themselves to the cultured world he wished to reach,— admissions of weakness or finiteness on the part of Jesus, stories of the devil tempting him, and of the casting out of demons. New doctrinal statements of the very highest order appear in gospel and epistle. “The idea of God is apprehended with a depth that is nowhere approached elsewhere in the New Testament. A philosopher may dispute the propositions both that God is spirit and that God is love, but he cannot surpass them in simplicity of scientific expression. The first basis of the religious life, the feeling of dependence, cannot be expressed with greater depth than in the gospel (3:27), the essence of sin with greater depth than in the epistle

(1: 8, 10; 2: 9)" (Schmiedel) The fundamental idea of this gospel is in the expression found nowhere else: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another";—an idea which in one form and another repeats itself over and over in gospel and epistle.

Thus it is easy to point out features in the transformed Gospel which are of great and permanent value; yet, from the fact that at some points it presents a higher development of Christianity, we must not infer that upon the whole we have here an advance upon the more primitive Gospel set forth in the actual words of Jesus. A writing made to meet the exigencies of the second century, however important the work it did then, however serviceable in parts it may since have been, cannot be expected, as a whole, to meet the very different exigencies of the twentieth century. There is no longer occasion to veil the Jewish origin of Jesus, or to take him out of the bounds of our common humanity by resort to the Logos doctrine of Philo and the old Greeks. We have learned that what is most human is, and is for that reason, most divine, and a better knowledge of the Jewish race in ancient days shows conclusively that most fittingly, most naturally, from that race

came the supreme religious leader of mankind. Moreover we are the more drawn to Jesus by the signs that he partook of our infirmities — signs frankly dropped here and there by the synoptists. Even their plain showing that he held to some of the prevailing delusions of his time does not offend us. We are offended, rather, by that scrupulous distortion of history by which he is made to appear superior to every limitation of time and place.

The two great movements in the early Church of which we have the conspicuous evidences in the New Testament, — movements called after Paul and John, though but remotely connected with those apostles, — are the first marked features in the evolution after Jesus of historical Christianity. Each had a distinctive value not to be lightly esteemed, each was a necessary part of the equipment with which the Church could enter the lists with hope of the conquest of the world, but both, in so far as they threw into the background the actual, historical figure of Jesus himself, or obscured him with a mystical, ideal representation, did a work which in these later times cannot be regarded with entire satisfaction. Like many a subsequent evolution in the Church, they have the drawback of suiting themselves to local and temporary emergencies, from which not all the universal and abiding

elements they contain can wholly rescue them. In our day there is notably springing up a desire to return to the real Jesus, to strip away all veils of Pauline dialectics and Johannine mysticism, and from the most primitive records to draw the inspiration of his very words, the kindling touch of a life actually lived among men. The new cult of Jesus makes one genuine word of his outvalue volumes that men have written about him.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### The New Testament Canon.

ANY adequate account of the formation of the New Testament canon is not possible within the limits of the present volume. Besides, it would involve a discussion of apocryphal books and writings of the early Christian Fathers unfamiliar and forbidding to the general reader. Exhaustive treatises on the subject are within easy reach of students.\* Only the merest glance, therefore, need here be taken of the process by which certain of the early Christian writings came to be reckoned Sacred Literature.

Wherever the word "scripture" occurs in the New Testament the reference is to the Old Testament, save only that the Pauline epistles are mentioned in II. Peter 3 : 16 in connection with "other scriptures." The date of II. Peter is uncertain, but it is believed to be the last-written book of the Bible, and to be later than the middle of the second century, as late

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\* For a very complete and candid statement of the whole matter see chap. II. of "Gospel Criticism and Historical Christianity," by the late Orello Cone, D. D.

probably as 175. While, previous to that time, no one ventured to class a Christian writing along with the Jewish Scriptures, as of equal sanctity, there was doubtless, from the first appearance of the gospels, a measure of reverence shown for them on account of their containing the words of Jesus. There were, however, many of these gospels, and not all were received with equal veneration. An informal process of selection went on, and the narratives believed to be the most authentic received the preference. In this way our three synoptics came eventually to be recognized as the authorized records of the life of Jesus. These, being read in the churches side by side with the Old Testament scriptures, tended gradually to take on a like sanctity. Justin Martyr, writing about the middle of the second century, gives evidence that the process was then at this stage; the gospels were used in the churches, but their inspiration was not affirmed; they had not yet attained to the rank of sacred scripture. The epistles, all later writings than the first two gospels, were not so early "sanctified by time," but what they lacked in age was made up by their character of circular letters, which led to their more frequent reading. The Apocalypse of John was also in the form of an address to the churches, and, on account of its prophetic character and its assumption

tion of divine inspiration, early acquired a quasi-sacred standing, at least with the Jewish Christians who harbored a strong enmity for the Roman empire. The Acts of the Apostles, when the apostles had become only a memory, readily took on a certain sanctity, just as did the epistles written in their names and accepted as theirs by an uncritical age. By the testimony of Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clement, a Christian canon was formed before the end of the second century, though the precise limits were not fixed, and books were received in some localities which were not admitted in others. The parts of our New Testament, some of which were omitted from the sacred collection made in one and another quarter, and which thus were brought under some question as to genuineness, are: Hebrews, James, I and II. Peter, II. and III. John, Jude, and the Apocalypse; and their questionable authenticity has given them the last places in the canonical collection. On the other hand, books were here and there admitted to the canon in the early centuries which have since been excluded. Among these are: I. and II. Clement, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the Gospel according to Peter, and the Apocalypse of Peter. Of some of these writings only fragments now remain. As far as the gospels are con-

cerned, the canonicity of our four to the exclusion of all others was fairly settled upon early in the third century, though, to the middle, Origen, and with him doubtless his contemporaries, wavered as to certain epistles. According to his statement there were certain documents which, being universally regarded in the Church as Holy Scripture, are to be unquestioningly received as such. These he elevated into a class by themselves as of undoubted inspiration. Other writings, accepted by some churches and rejected by others, he relegated to a second class as of possible or doubtful inspiration. By the end of the third century a substantial agreement was reached, though the epistles of Clement held their place in some bibles two hundred years longer.

In the selection of writings for admission to the canon the judgment of the Church was better than the main ground of that judgment, if, as Davidson said, "the choice was determined by various circumstances, of which apostolic origin was the chief," -- it now appearing extremely doubtful that any part of the New Testament is from the hand of an apostle. To really appreciate the wise discrimination shown it needs to read some of the uncanonical Christian productions that have come down from that period. The choice was wise, but it could not have been difficult.

## CONCLUSION.

WE have now traced, as far as may be done within the limits of this work, the evolution of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. The process, in its beginnings obscure and indeterminate, is well in view for a period of more than nine hundred years. From first to last these writings register the spiritual development of the Jewish people, bringing us down into the time of their final dispersion over the world. It is the Jewish religious genius that predominates in them, but this has obviously been influenced by one and another of the great forces which have swayed the world: first by Egypt in the dim beginnings of the national existence, then by Babylon through a long period, drawing thence many a law and legend, rite and custom, then for two centuries touched by Persian thought, imbibing something of the dualism of Zarathustra, taking from him the happy impulse to psalmody; upon Alexander's conquest of Asia coming under the spell of Greek thought, and greatly affected

by final contact and collision with Rome. All these influences had to do with the making of the Bible, while yet the fundamental conceptions remained Jewish. The strong national exclusiveness estopped any sweeping foreign tendency, and kept clear certain of the ancient characteristic strains.

As has often been pointed out, evolutionary movements do not take a straight upward course, but proceed on undulatory lines, now rising, now falling, like the waves of the sea. So, while from the earliest written word of our scriptures to the word of Jesus there is, on the whole, progress, the several steps are not all upward. No question arises as to the work of the first prophets being reformatory, rough as it was; and the great prophets of the eighth century led thought and worship to wonderful heights; but so much cannot be said of the priestly influence which afterwards rose to supremacy, setting up a rigid ceremonial which it took the whole force of the Pauline party in the second Christian century to break down. There was engendered by it a barren formalism, obstructive to the last degree to every reformatory movement, a formalism against which John the Baptist, Jesus, Stephen, and others beat out their lives. Something may doubtless be said for the priests and their Law. They did for the time a service which seemed

to be needed , but the fact remains that what they did had to be done away. It pertained to the temporalities and not to the eternities. It was on the downward curl of the undulating billow of progress, to be swallowed up in the onward motion of the wave. Hence the setting aside in Christian reckoning, as null and void, of the whole mass of Jewish ceremonial which makes up so considerable a part of the Old Testament.

This summary proceeding, which was necessitated in the process of transferring Christianity to the non-Jewish world, naturally led, soon or late, to further free handling of the Jewish scriptures, to the pointing out of the unworthiness of a book like Esther to be greatly revered, to marking with protest as unworthy of a book of religion the disheartening character of certain statements in Ecclesiastes Other parts besides the ceremonial Law are found to be uninspiring, retrogressive, proper to be set aside in the onward movement of thought and feeling. Thus canonical writings of the fourth and second centuries B. C. are in some cases found to be far inferior to writings of the eighth century, showing that progress was not continuous and uniform While the general movement of thought was upward, there were moments of marked decline. That religion, however, more than held its

own through the later centuries is amply shown by the best of the Psalms, by the book of Job, and by the high spirituality of some of the later prophets.

The course of evolution in the New Testament presents a somewhat different problem. There the more thoughtful writers come last, the synoptic gospels depending for their value almost wholly on the report they make of Jesus' sayings and doings. In their knowledge of the world and of the world's thought, and in their power of statement, the writers of these gospels are not to be compared with the men of the second century who produced the Pauline and the Johannine literature. Yet we may well question that religion on the whole was advanced by these latter beyond the point where Jesus left it. Beyond a doubt, the Gospel, by the transformation, was made more acceptable to Greeks and Romans, its triumph in that age rendered possible; but judged absolutely, judged by the needs of the modern world, was it improved?

To begin with, its simplicity was sacrificed; for, simple as the *language* of the Johannine writings is, their *thought* is not simple, and the Pauline are simple neither in style nor in substance. Both are burdened with an enormous weight of dogma -- subject of interminable discussion -- of which there is in the Jesus of the synoptists slight intimation. To the

modern mind, they have at many points the quality of inciting doubt or arousing protest; whereas a marked characteristic of Jesus is that he commands instant acquiescence. We marvel at his power of speaking our own feelings, aspirations, longings, of revealing us to ourselves. Then, the philosophy of the second century, and the problems on which it was turned, are alike strange to the thought of the present day; they are passed away as completely as was the Jewish ceremonial for non-Jewish converts when Christianity knocked at the gates of Rome. The writings subsequent to the synoptic gospels show a great development of doctrine; but in religion, what do they more than to elaborate, and that not always without distortion, what is given in the gospels?

We therefore conclude that the culminating point of religious development for the long period covered by our scriptures is in the Gospel and the person of Jesus; that the after evolution registered in the New Testament, while having great historical, ethical, and doctrinal significance, is not to be regarded as a higher form of Christianity, but as an adaptation to meet the exigencies of the time, a phase inferior to that set forth in the first gospels. And this accords with the obvious desire of the best minds of our time to go back, from epistles and apocalypse and mystic gospel written with

a dogmatic purpose, to sit at the feet of the Master himself, the preacher whose words have the quality of provoking no protest.

It cannot but be that a consideration such as has here been made of the origin and growth of our scriptures will have a decisive bearing on the estimate to be placed on them. The old notion, if one has entertained it, that these writings were miraculously communicated to the Jews, becomes thoroughly undermined, and their dictatorial authority vanishes. By this change of view the Bible itself is not changed, but the student, in laying aside the magnifying glass of an excessive reverence, is differently impressed by it. "Those whose minds are not shut up by an undiscriminating reverence,—those to whom it has become a necessity to think and feel as they read,—must surely own their disappointment that the divine gleams which kindle them [in the Bible's pages] are so sparse and transient, and so soon quenched by the mists of an obsolete world and the dust of its crumbled controversies. There are few more pathetic experiences than that of the young enthusiast, whose devotion has consecrated every page of scripture, but whose intellect wakes to read it critically at last, and who has to reduce his prophecies into history,---to find the drama of the parables played out long ago in Galilee and Jerusalem;

to discover that the Last Judgment, which art and poetry have solemnized in vain, is the lost dream of a world that has outlived its end;— and whose sacred thirst, increased with the fever of disappointment, has to retreat to fountains ever narrowing, till he has drunk so often of the beatitudes, the parting discourses, and the remaining dews of scattered sweetness here and there, that he goes for a draught of fuller refreshment to à Kempis or Tauler.”\*

Pathetic, yes ; but the gain of enlightenment always exceeds the sentimental loss — dwarfs it out of sight. And, let us make bold to say, where the ancient scripture palls upon us we need not hark back even to Tauler or à Kempis ; we may be drawn rather to gifted spirits of our own time, men and women who have been the manifestation of God to us ; for we too can speak at first hand of “that which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have beheld and our hands have handled of the Word of life.”

The Bible is what it is, and no theory of a supernatural origin for it can in the least change it objectively, any more than a fancy that the Venus of Milo was chiseled in heaven and thence passed down to

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\* Martineau.

earth could affect the æsthetic worth of the statue. The Bible itself is precisely the same thing whether considered the work of men or of supernal powers. The theory of origin gives no real ground for passing judgment on the work, but it does give ground for passing judgment on the authors. If men out of their own minds and hearts wrote all that is therein contained, we cannot withhold from them our reverence for the heights they attained; while if a Being or beings infinitely superior did it, we cannot say as much. If men did it simply as amanuenses responding to a controlling Power beyond themselves, our esteem for them need not be great. It is said by those who profess to be wise in such matters that a mere nobody may be the medium through which the spirit of Shakespeare or of Plato will speak; so the merely mechanical medium of the Eternal would call for no special reverence. Our respect for the Bible writers rises in the degree that we attribute to themselves what they wrote.

Critical studies do not change the Bible in itself, they change our historical and subjective conception of it; and not in a way to involve any such loss as the timid conservative is apt to think. After the most searching studies, all precious things are there that ever were there — high thoughts about God, the

clear voice of conscience, the vision of human brotherhood, the exaltation of spiritual above material values, — all are there as before, however accompanied by the errors and misconceptions of early human experience. Our only loss is that of an ancient and imposing delusion as to how the teachings came there. The gain is LIBERTY, — liberty to choose, and to follow the good; deliverance from the dominating authority of what has been called the “written Word,” but which under critical examination proves to be an aggregation of literature in the nature of the case without unity; reaching at points to heights nowhere else attained, but in the mass heterogeneous, contradictory, impossible in many parts to follow; — and the committal of the soul to the guidance of the free Spirit, out of which have come all bibles, all holiest thoughts, all highest things



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